



Milton Nobles'

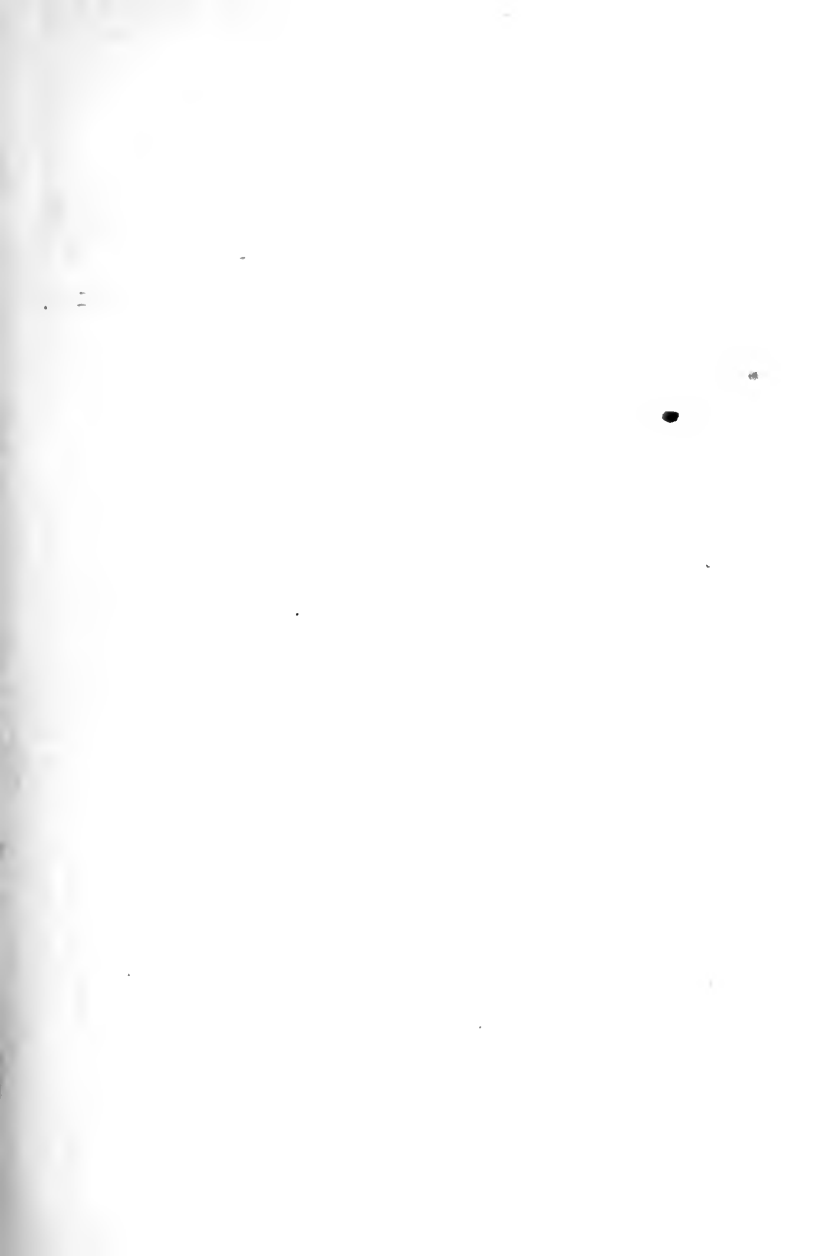


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Milton Nobles'



“Shop Talk.”

AUTHOR OF THE PLAYS OF:

• •	“Love and Law,”	• •
• •	“The Phoenix,”	• •
“A Man of the People,”		
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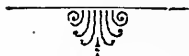
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

I am just in receipt of a letter from my publisher, calling attention to the fact that I had failed to write a preface. It is singular that I should have overlooked this important prefix, since the preface affords an author his best opportunity to apologize for his temerity and offer the extenuating circumstances, should any exist. Some months ago, when I conceived the idea of perpetuating this volume, I met on Fulton street, Brooklyn, an old acquaintance, an ex-actor, manager and playwright, now a politician and local statesman. I mentioned to him, incidentally, that I thought of getting out a book. "What for?" he asked, promptly. The incisive bluntness of the question dazed me for a moment. After pulling myself together carefully I replied, apologetically: "For fifty cents in paper covers, a dollar in cloth." He

looked at me thoughtfully for a time, and replied: "That's different, of course." As my reply seemed, in a measure, to satisfy my cynical friend, I have determined to let it go to the public as my only justification for what follows.

THE AUTHOR.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
The Palmy Day Tragedian, six papers, . . .	7
Yorick's Skull,	59
Hard Times,	78
Penalty Bloggs,	85
The Isaacs-Crummels' Boom,	94
"George,"	112
Stage Aspirants,	125
A Chat with the Brakeman,	133
"Sary,"	137
The Mission of the Theatre,	143
And the Villain Still Pursued Her,	146
Stage Anecdotes,	151
Wrecked Geniuses,	164
A Running Conversation,	180
Flotsam and Jetsam,	195





THE PALMY DAY TRAGEDIAN.

FIRST PAPER.

HE DISCOURSES UPON THE DECADENCE OF HIS ART,
AND RECALLS SOME INCIDENTS AMUSING AND
OTHERWISE--A REMINISCENCE OF FORREST IN
1857--HE TALKS ABOUT THE FUND MEETING.

“**A**CTORS!” sneered the palmy day tragedian, as he posed gracefully against his favorite awning post and passed his thin fingers through his suspiciously black

curls. "Actors! There are no actors now. Count them upon your fingers. Where are they? Forrest, Eddy, Davenport, Jennings, Whalley, Adams, Chanfrau, Hamblin, Scott, Goodall—gone, all gone," and for a moment his thin face grew sad and his sunken eyes moistened, as he gazed with a far-away look over the heads of his listeners; then, with a mournful pathos, he added, "Why, there are scarcely a dozen of us left."

"Oh, yes," he continued, in answer to a query, "I attended the Fund meeting. I saw the thousand people gathered there, but not a thousand 'actors;' no, sir, heaven forbid! I saw scores of dudes sucking their massive canes, whose silver knobs were as empty as their own. Hundreds of frivolous butterflies, in gaudy tints, who came from the Lord knows where, and are drifting the Lord knows whither. Oh, yes, I saw them all, and when Palmer mentioned the name of my old friend, Ned, 'the noblest Roman of them all,' I saw these 'actors' look inquiringly at each other. And one of these 'actors,' a fellow with a cane bigger than himself, with a glass in his eye, and a moustache that reminded one of a caterpillar—this

‘actor’ turned and asked me who Forrest was. Yes, sir, he actually asked me who Edwin Forrest was! Actors! actors!! Ye gods, can such things be, and overcome us like a summer’s cloud without our special wonder?”

As no one evinced a disposition to answer this conundrum, the tragedian resumed: “I was proud to see my old friends Dion Boucicault and Harry Watkins on the stage, among the favored few. It shows that the real actor, though in the minority, still gets there all the same. I also noted other old “companions of the isle” — Billy Florence, Tom Keene and evergreen old Uncle Ben. But I missed Bob Johnson and Jack Studley. But, Aunt Louisa was there; I have observed that Louisa is generally there.”

“Did you hear Ingersoll’s speech?” asked a tall man with an asthmatic voice and checkered pantaloons.

“Yes, sir, every word of it. ‘A fellow of infinite jest’ is my friend Bob; also of most excellent fancy. His tribute to genius as embodied in art, literature and the drama was worthy of the man, and that is saying much. His tribute to Shakespeare, ‘the intellectual ocean into

which pour all of the rivers of thought,' was a figure of speech worthy the occasion and the theme. His tribute to the play-house and players of our own generation was happy, logical and full of solid 'chunks of wisdom.' And right there is where he should have stopped. There were many good Christian men and women there, and the occasion was sacred in its significance; and Ingersoll, who was fully equal to the occasion on its merits, should have left his hobby at home."

A small, fat man, with a large nose and a Seymore coat, inquired whether Forrest had been a church member.

"Not exactly a church member, perhaps," replied the tragedian, severely, "but still a believer and a God-fearing man."

"He must have been a great actor," said the Lyceum-School man, who was holding up the other awning-post, and looking with admiration and envy at the tragedian.

"He was a *man*," said the noble son of Thespis, lifting his hat reverently, "take him for all in all I shall not look upon his like again."

"Did you ever act with him?" asked the Lyceum man.

"Did I ever play with Ned Forrest!" hissed the tragedian. Then he surveyed his little group of listeners with a glance of comprehensive contempt, "When this poor frame shall be laid in the earth; when in after years the children of Thespis shall make their annual visit to the Actors' plot, to strew with flowers the graves of the humble and unwritten members of their craft, let them read upon the slab that covers me, only this: 'He supported Forrest.'" Then he brushed a fly off his bald spot, and carefully replaced his last year's silk hat. The oppressive silence following this burst of feeling was finally broken by the fat man, who asked the tragedian to tell them something about Forrest.

"O memory," he mused, "thou art a volume rich in sacred lore, and while I approve not of casting pearls before swine, yet will I a tale unfold, that now comes to me wafted down the corridors of years. Way back in '57—the year known in our history as 'hard times'—I was in Cleveland. John Ellsler and Felix A. Vincent were the managers. Both are still among the living. Those were hard times, indeed, for the poor player. The luxury of a salary was un-

known The managers continued to give weekly about four or five dollars to each member of the company. Just enough to keep the wolf from the door. There were some good actors there, too; real actors. There were C. E. Graham, T. B. Douglass, L. J. Vincent, Ada Clifton, Gus Fenno, Ed. L. Mortimer and others.

“ But I started to say something about Forrest. Well, in the company was a poor fellow named Graham. He was second comedian. Most of us were single young fellows, but Graham had an invalid wife, and three wee little children. Yet for those five mouths there was but the one share on pay-day, and doctors and medicine had to be paid for; there was no fund and no free doctor then. We would all chip in five or ten cents a week from our miserable pittances to swell Graham’s little store. Poor fellow, it was sad to see him at night trying to be funny, his pale, hollow cheeks daubed with paint, his sunken eyes red and swollen with nightly vigils over a dying wife and hungry little ones. But he never complained. He was the son of a New England clergyman. Returning from college, he had secretly married his young sister’s governess, and was driven

from his home. He loved his wife and children devotedly, and was actually starving himself to death to keep them from hunger.

"Forrest was to open in *Metamora*. It was in the spring, and the weather was getting warm. During the long, tiresome rehearsal I noticed that Graham seemed unusually weak, and finally Forrest, who thought he was stupid, spoke brusquely to him and pushed him aside, and a moment later the poor fellow fell in a dead faint. Every one gathered about him, doing nothing, as usual under such circumstances.

"What's the matter?" said Forrest, coming over to the entrance, and comprehending the situation, he picked the poor emaciated form in his brawny arms and carried him to the back door. 'Get some ice!' roared the great actor. Just then an ice-wagon was passing in the alley. I snatched from the rear of the wagon a big square block of ice, and two of us rolled it to the door. 'Break it up!' shouted *Metamora*. A dozen started for an axe, but in the confusion nothing was forthcoming. Forrest handed the fainting Graham over to one of the ladies, and seized the mammoth block of ice. Talk about

Atlas supporting the globe, or Jove hurling the bolts! Bah! They are tame compared to that picture of Edwin Forrest lifting the massive block of ice above his majestic head and dashing it into a thousand pieces on the stone sill at his feet. Then he took the poor frail figure in his mighty arms, and with his great dark hand stroked the pale temples and ashen cheeks. And poor Graham! When he recovered and saw the face of the tragedian bending over him, the look of comic terror that overspread his countenance completely upset us all. The poor boy was nearly frightened into another swoon and tried to blubber out some apology. We all had to laugh in spite of his pale and terror-stricken face, and Forrest patted him on the head, and joined in the laughter. Then, calling the stage manager, he asked him a few questions, ordered a carriage and sent the poor boy home. He gave orders that he should be left out of the bills and excused from rehearsals for the entire week.

"That boy is sick," growled Forrest. "Give him a week's rest." On the following Monday morning Graham reported for duty, a changed man. There was color in his cheek, light in

his eye and vigor in his step. But tears were in his eyes, too. Yes, sir, tears, but they were tears of joy and thankfulness. And then he told us how the great Forrest had visited his poor garret, talked pleasantly to his wife, and kissed his children. How each day of the week had brought them a basket laden with substantial food, and how on Saturday night there came a sealed envelope containing one hundred dollars, with no word of explanation. Yes, gentlemen, one hundred dollars, and this is fact, not fiction."

"Poor Graham! He was a noble fellow," mused the tragedian after a pause. "At the breaking out of the war he enlisted as a private soldier, rose to the rank of major of cavalry, was twice breveted for heroic conduct and died a hero's death leading a forlorn hope in the Wilderness."

"Move on!" shouted the unappreciative cop, "Move on!"

The tragedian squandered one lofty, withering glance upon him, and moved on. The tall man with the asthma folded his duster about him and wandered to his favorite bench in Union Square park. The fat man with the

Seymour coat and large nose dropped into the nearest beer saloon, and the Lyceum School actor went home to study Hamlet.

SECOND PAPER.

“When Roscius was an actor in Rome,” mused the tragedian.

“Then came each actor on his ass,” suggested the fat comedian, with a broad, all around smile, which threatened to become a full-blown laugh, until it was untimely nipped by a withering glance from the tragedian, when it spread out over his fat face and disappeared ignominiously behind his ample ears. The silence which intervened was embarrassing, particularly for the fat man, who realized that he had gone too far.

The man with asthma at last made bold: “You have not been in your accustomed haunts for some days,” he said apologetically.

"No; since our last meeting I have been *en tour*."

"Did you visit Chicago?" asked the Lyceum School actor.

"No, we visited Red Bank, Paterson and Elizabeth. We were to have invaded Trenton and Newark, but circumstances over which we had no control, caused the abandonment of our original plans. However, Elizabeth is a good closing point. Newark would have been better by the matter of an hour's jaunt; but that's not much."

"Did you play your favorite character of Othello?" This by the Lyceum man.

"No; I did enact one Uncle Tom, and I was killed before we reached the capital, and a brute killed me too. Shades of Brutus; that I should live to become a turkey actor, aye, and an Uncle Tom turkey actor."

It was subsequently learned that the term "turkey actor" is applied to those artists who, owing to circumstances beyond their control, are compelled to linger the greater portion of the year in and about the metropolis, devoting their talents to Thanksgiving and Christmas "snaps."

"Did the ghost walk at all?" asked the man with the asthma.

"Walk, walk! he did not even wake up. But that we could have borne. The humiliation was not that we closed; it was the manner of the closing; not the effect but the cause."

"Drunken agent, I suppose," said the man with the Seymore coat.

"No, sir, it was the usual thing—a kicker."

"Oh, I see," said the Lyceum school actor, "it was professional jealousy." The withering glance with which the tragedian crushed the last speaker, will be understood in the light of what follows:

"Was it Eva's mother or Aunt Ophelia who kicked," asked the fat man.

"Neither, sir, it was the star. In other words the jackass; yes, sir, the jackass. To this complexion have we come at last; we support jackasses on the New Jersey circuit." For a time the tragedian seemed wrapped in his indignation, his mind no doubt reverting to the time when he had supported his old friend Forrest. During this pause the fat man intimated to the Lyceum School actor that he had lost the op-

portunity of a life time in not having joined that company as understudy.

"Yes, sir, a jackass!" suddenly roared the tragedian in a tone that startled the asthma man, and queered the fat comedian's laugh. "It was a case of pool; a regular combine. The comedian had saved a season's salary from an engagement in one of John Stevens' companies, and bought a jackass. His racket was a joint engagement for the two comedy rolls, Marks and the Donkey. Thus, you see, the arch conspirator obtained the bulge, as it were. A sudden collapse had no terrors for him. Even should he fail to realize on his donkey, he could still ride home. However, we will now reorganize."

The Lyceum School man brightened up at once. "Do you think there will be an opening for me?" he asked.

"Undoubtedly, we now require just one more man. A responsible person to act as treasurer and play George Shelby in the last act."

An oppressive silence intervened, only broken by the breathing of the man with asthma. "He will be required to deposit—" posterity will never know the concluding words of this

sentence, for the reason that they were not spoken. The fat comedian had rolled over a beer barrel into the gutter, and by the time the man with the duster had fished him out, the Lyceum School actor had disappeared.

"I see that George Boniface's new play is quite a go," said the tall man, wiping a bit of mud from his eye with the corner of his duster.

"Yes, sir," replied the tragedian, "and I'm glad of it for George's sake, and Foster's too. They are a couple of the back numbers who are worth reading. I wonder if George remembers when he and I were boot-jacks at the Old Bowery in 1859? Ah! they were a merry band, and a bright one, too. Let me see how many of them I can recall, living and dead." The old actor covered his pale face for a moment with his thin, white hands, and when he removed them something like a tear glistened in either eye: "George Wood and Ned Tilton were the managers. Dead, both dead. Will Tayton, Sydney Wilkins, Harry Jordan, W. H. Ward, Mrs. Leighton, Mrs. Burroughs, Hattie Arnold—all dead, I believe. And of the living I recall Andy Glassford, Sam Ryan, Charles Foster, Bob Johnson, Kate Denin, Mrs. Jordan

and Jim Collier. Those who have seen Jim act in late years tell me that he is a worse actor now than he was in 1859. This I will never believe. To play was work in those days, but we had lots of fun nevertheless. I remember one Monday night when a new drama was to be produced. Two rehearsals were all we ever expected then, three at most. In the new play Bob Johnson was to be the hero and Bill Ward the villain. Ward's part was a terror—about forty-five lengths. Ward was a fine actor, but he was also very fond of fishing, and Sundays, which in stock times was the actor's study day, Ward usually devoted to his favorite sport. As a consequence he was generally fluky on Monday nights. On this particular Monday night he was particularly shaky. He had not only fished all day Sunday, but got becalmed, and barely reached the city Monday morning in time for rehearsal. Ward was winging the long heavy villain; didn't know a line, but he was a great winger. During the second act he had to rush on to the hero, and drawing from his bosom a large document, wave it triumphantly in the air, and exclaim: 'Behold, fond dotard, in this little parchment I hold' thy fate; here,

duly attested, are written proofs of thy friend's baseness and the maiden's perfidy.' Ward rushed on and got on as far as 'fond dotard,' when he rammed his hand into his breast, and a ghostly pallor overspread his face.

"He had forgotten his prop. There was no document. The pause was but for an instant. Ward jammed his hand into the other side of his tunic with a grin of satisfaction; his part was there where he had thrust it upon entering. Drawing forth the manuscript triumphantly, he waived it in the air and finished the speech. But he had forgotten the business of the hero. Johnson seized the part and commenced tearing it to pieces. "Here, here! hold on Bob, don't, d——n it! That's my part, and I don't know it," whispered Ward. "Served you right! Go fishing on Sunday, will ye?" hissed Johnson, and dashing the fragments upon the floor, he stamped upon them, exclaiming: "Perish forever the vile record." It was the middle of a scene, and Bob knew that something must be done to save the act. So, seizing Ward by the throat, he dragged him off *RIE*, *a la* Damon and Lucullus, exclaiming, "And as I stamp the falsehood from this per-

jured evidence, so will I wring the base libel from thy craven throat.' The curtain came down, and there was a double call. Ward and Johnson took the call from opposite sides, marched to the centre, and shook hands heroically. The piece had been a dead frost up to that time, but Ward's fishing and Johnson's ready wit made a situation which saved it from inevitable failure. Ward had to wing from the prompt stand for the rest of the play, but he got there."

During the foregoing recital the Lyceum School man had quietly slipped back to his accustomed post. "That reminds me of an incident," said the tall man with asthma, "that occurred at the old Metropolitan in Sacramento, in '69. I was playing Roaring Ralph Stackpole with Joe Proctor."

"What, with that voice!" interrupted the fat man. "No wonder Sacramento is a bad show town."

The comedian got his laugh, and the children of genius dropped into the basement and quaffed the foaming nectar. And the Lyceum School man, as usual, paid the score.

THIRD PAPER.

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players," mused the tragedian, "and I have in my time played many parts."

"Did you reorganize the Uncle Tom company?" asked the man with asthma.

"We did not reorganize," answered the tragedian, with dignity. "The Rondout manager declined to advance fares when he learned that we had no jackass. However, their loss was my temporary gain. As soon as it was known that our tour would not be resumed, a brisk rivalry began among metropolitan managers for my services. While my last engagement has not added materially to my reputation as a legitimate attraction, I am a small gainer in the matter of financial standing and a large gainer in the matter of experience."

"Experience!" said the Lyceum man, "Why, I fancied there was no walk of the drama which you had not traversed."

"Young man," replied the tragedian, "I am now five-and-thirty years an actor, but I am

still a student. The true artist is never satisfied with himself, and each night of his professional life he learns something, as often from a good as from a bad actor; the one shows him something to emulate, the other something to avoid. When I was two years an actor I knew it all; in five years I had reached the stage where I was willing to learn something; in ten years my head had resumed its normal proportions, and since that time I have been learning how to act. It took me five years to learn how to properly make an entrance and an exit, and I have seen others who had not learned it in ten."

"Speaking of entrances and exits," said the man with the asthma and linen duster, "reminds me of an incident that occurred at the American theatre in San Francisco in 1855. We had a grand production of Mazeppa. Lon Phelps did Mazeppa. Lon was afraid of horses, and refused to make the run, so they had to resort to a double. J. J. McClosky was made up for the double, and masked in by the crowd of peasants and retainers, was strapped to the fiery untamed, and dashed up the mountains. Each night there was a big call, and Phelps,

carefully made up in fleshings, would march triumphantly in front of the curtain, bowing and smiling his thanks for the call. On the fifth night of the play the second run gave way and McClosky and the horse disappeared together, amid cracking boards and timbers. Of course, there was great excitement, and the audience began calling to learn whether Mazzeppa was seriously hurt. After a short wait, Phelps swelled out in front of the curtain, with a little property-blood on his face and hands, and limping desperately, but smiling a sad, sweet, painful smile, as though saying, 'Its nothing, ladies and gentlemen, a mere scratch, nothing more, I assure you.' Meantime the carpenters and supers were dragging poor McClosky out from under the mass of broken boards, horse, etc. Mac was badly shaken up, but not seriously hurt. The audience in front was wildly applauding Phelps' mock heroics. The stage manager, who in the excitement had forgotten all about the double, pulled McClosky down to the first entrance shouting, 'Go out; go out and let 'em see that you ain't hurt.' Mac, half dazed with pain and fright, and not realizing what he was doing, stepped in front

of the curtain, with real blood on his face, and nursing a genuine lame leg. Just as he came on Phelps started to limp off, and they met face to face in the centre of the stage. The expressions on the faces of Phelps and McClosky, as the situation suddenly dawned on them, baffles description. Had they been costumed as the Dromios that expression would have immortalized them. For the space of about ten seconds there was a deathly stillness in the audience, then, as the truth of the double struck them, there went up a yell that nearly raised the roof. The two Mazeppas forgot their limps and rushed behind the curtain at opposite sides. At each subsequent appearance, during the evening, Phelps was greeted with yells of laughter, and after the next night the play was taken off."

"Not bad, not bad," said the tragedian, patronizingly. "All of which goes to show the degenerate tendencies of the times in matters pertaining to our art. In 1855 we supported horses, a few years later the jackass came to the front, and now we have got down to dogs."

"Dogs?" asked the fat comedian. "How is that?"

"Yes, sir, I repeat it, dogs! I thought when

I played Uncle Tom, with the jackass starred, that I had fathomed the depth of professional degradation. Vain delusion! The dog star is now in the ascendant. Since our last meeting I have been supporting the celebrated dramatic dogs, 'Terror' and 'Leviathan,' assisted by the talented young actors and authors, the Barber Brothers. My last engagement was one of those in which I learned much—that should be avoided. I did enact the heavy villain. In each act I desperately assaulted the suffering heroine, to be in turn torn to pieces by the canine heroes. In each act they were to feast upon a different portion of my anatomy, and for each occasion I had a sole leather pad covered with red flannel, suitably adjusted to receive the assault. In the first act when I said to the maiden, 'Fair maiden, resistance is useless. You must, you shall be mine,' the star threw on a dog from R. I. E. 'Terror' wagged his tail good naturedly and looked up into my face in a friendly sort of way; then he sat down and began to scratch himself behind the ear with his left foot. 'Sick him, Terror,' shouted the dog star from the wing. 'Go on, sick 'im, you — — —, — — —! Why

the h— — — —?’ Meantime the maiden was screaming for help, and I was repeating speeches from all of the maiden pursuers that I had ever played. The louder the author swore in the second entrance, the louder the audience laughed, and the harder the dog scratched. Finally, fearing Terror might lie down and go to sleep, I seized him by the ears, pulled his nose up against the red pad on my throat, and held him there while we struggled desperately about the stage, the heroine screaming and the orchestra playing *forte*, till curtain. Then the star and author kicked the dog all over the stage in four different languages, with a Mott Street dialect. All of this I could have endured in silence, but when the star came to my dressing-room and said, ‘Soy, young feller, ye didn’t give de dog his cue,’ I took him gently but firmly by the hair and bumped his head against the door-jam. The Barber Brothers and dogs have now offered me the position of stage manager and leading man with their combination.”

“Will you accept?” asked the asthma man.

“I hardly know. Palmer and Dan Frohman both want me, but they won’t pay anything.

Abbey has written me not to close until he gets back from Europe. So for the present matters must remain in *status quo*."

The Lyceum School actor listened to the closing sentence with silent, open-mouthed wonder; the tall man gazed vacantly at the statue of Washington, and the fat comedian slid down the baluster into the basement and hid himself behind a schooner.

FOURTH PAPER.

"The summer days have come again, the saddest of the year," sighed the tragedian, as he gracefully wiped a bit of dust from his newly-ironed hat. The fat comedian with the Seymour coat evidently thought of something very funny, for a smile stole over his face, but whatever the gem was he heroically suppressed it, seeing that the tragedian had not finished.

"I am moved to these reflections," continued

the friend of Forrest, "by the remembrance of a painful incident which occurred this morning as I was about to leave my hotel on the Rue de la Bleecker. The lack of confidence which seems to prevail among boarding house keepers at this particular season, is simply absurd. However, this morning's experience is but one of the many incidents, trifling in themselves, yet in the aggregate embarrassing, that come with each summer's solstice."

The Lyceum School actor, who lives with his family and has not yet had an engagement, failed to catch the true spirit of these reflections, but the fat comedian and the man with the duster showed by the thoughtful cast of their countenances that the comedian had struck within them a responsive chord.

"I rise," said the man with asthma, "to a question of privilege."

"The member from the Pacific may proceed," said the tragedian.

"On the occasion of our last sitting——"

"Standing," interrupted the comedian.

"I accept the amendment. At our last 'standing' I recalled an incident of a performance of Mazeppa at the old American Theatre,

San Francisco, in 1854. A few days later I met my old friend McClosky at the Fund rooms. He congratulated me upon having got the incidents so perfect after so many years, and told me a part of the story which I had forgotten. C. R. Thorne (the elder) was the manager, and Jim Dowling (dead) was stage manager. It was Dowling who pushed McClosky in front of the curtain while Lon Phelps was bowing his acknowledgments. When they got off Phelps wanted to thrash Mac, insisting that he had done it purposely. It seems that just at this time Mrs. Phelps was up the country on a tour, and Lon had made an impression upon a fair 'Friscan, whom he had in front nightly to witness his desperate ride and hand him an elaborate bouquet when he took his call. Phelps accused McClosky of showing him up and trying to make him ridiculous, and they didn't speak as they passed by for several weeks. 'I wouldn't have minded it,' said Lon, 'if my girl hadn't been in front.'"

"And my old friend, Jeremy Diddler, was right," said the tragedian. "No weapon so fatal to the soldier, the sage or the lover as ridicule."

"Right you are," said the fat comedian, "It was ridicule that drove me into comedy."

"Ridicule has much to answer for," said the tragedian.

The tall man with asthma rattled out a laugh; he was now quits with the comedian for a former thrust.

"Yes, sir," said the comedian, "I have always felt that nature intended me for a tragedian; but while amply endowing me with the requisite mental resources, she made my body too short."

"And your nose too long," said the tall man.

"I was all right in utility," continued the fat man, "but my trouble commenced when I reached the walking gents, and it culminated the following season when I tried the juveniles. I was with Garry Hough on the Michigan circuit at the time. We used to travel in wagons and show under canvas. I was as slim as a match, and didn't weigh over a hundred pounds. Hough got hold of some 'society' lady, who wanted to play Juliet. Like the most of 'em she was fair, fat, and anywhere from 35 to 50. I had to play Romeo with her, and I nearly got lost in her clothes three or

four times. Everytime she embraced me I disappeared and the audience roared. Her performadce was not very intellectual nor spir- ituelle, but when she fell on me in the last act in front of Capulet's tomb, I realized that what she lacked in mind she made up in inatter. It seems that I had died on the trap in which we had buried Ophelia the night before, and when Juliet struck me I doubled up and went through. It didn't make any difference with the play, however, as the audience couldn't have seen me, anyway, after she buried me. The next night we were doing *The Hunchback*. The star was the Julia and I was wrestling with Sir Thomas Clifford. We got along very nicely, until the last act, where Sir Thomas enters as my lord's secretary. She belched out her 'Clifford, why don't you speak to me?' in the old-time style. I handed her the letter, saying, 'A letter from my lord.' At that moment one of the mules that we used for hauling baggage, and which was tied to the wagon near by, let a series of unearthly brays out of himself that fairly shook the tent-poles. When the echoes had died away Julia spoke her next line, 'Twas Clifford's voice if ever Clifford spoke.' The

play ended right there, and I went into low comedy the next week."

"Alas! how true it is," mused the tragedian, "that the braying of a donkey is frequently more potent in shaping our destinies than the voice of conscience or the admonitions of friendship—which reflection calls to my mind a little incident not unconnected with my old friend John Burke. The major has been many things in his day—actor, agent, manager, scout (at Erastina), author, lecturer, but first, and all the time, genial, big-hearted John Burke, whom age cannot wither nor custom stale. John's labors in the field of dramatic authorship are confined, I believe, to one youthful folly. It was in Buffalo, just one-and-twenty years ago. Those who now gaze in admiration upon John's massive, manly form, could scarcely conceive the slender stripling of 1867. It was near the end of the season, when John prevailed on Manager Carr to try his first and (I believe) last play. I have forgotten the name, but it is not material. Burke used to sit in the orchestra and observe the rehearsals. It was in the days when there was a nightly change of bill, and a daily rehearsal of the night's play, so new pro-

ductions stood a poor chance. But John's faith was great, and as we began to evolve a little order out of his chaos, his confidence became a conviction. One thing caused us all some uneasiness; the leading man (poor Dick Healey) had a very long part, and at the last rehearsal he didn't know a line. However, Dick assured the author that he would 'be all right at night,' and told Burke that it was a great play—sure winner. On this assurance Burke went to the leading restaurant and ordered a supper for the entire company and members of the press, all of whom received a personal invitation.

"Well, sir, during my five-and thirty years of professional life, I have officiated in different capacities at the births and deaths of many dramatic bantlings, but this still-born effort of Burke's aspiring muse was something entirely unique in my experience; and to add to the horror of the situation, Healey was 'blind;' he couldn't speak a line. How we got through that night has been a mystery to me ever since. Poor Dick was often given to the cup that cheers, but he had got far beyond the cheering point on that occasion. The performance was so dire that not one of us had the courage to meet the

author or share his supper. He had been modest and unassuming, and we all felt a genuine sympathy for him. But the play, aside from Healy's dereliction, was so bad that we could not possibly have said a cheering thing to him, and so we all went quietly home. The critics left after the first act. But John remembered his obligations as a host, and going to the restaurant seated himself at the head of the table and awaited the arrival of his guests. In about thirty minutes a solitary figure loomed up in the door. It was Healy, full to the eyes. Dick steadied himself against the door for a minute, and then made a pass for the nearest chair; he missed it and fell across the table. Recovering and bracing himself against a chair, he threw an arm around Burk's neck, exclaiming: 'S'great play, John, s'great play—how'gi like my las' tact?' John placed him gently in a chair and then withdrew to a respectful distance and gazed at his guest. And there let us leave them," said the tragedian, "the author and his *bete noir*." In the abundant prosperity of later years, John can well afford to smile at this failure and to forgive the one who aggravated his sufferings. Dick was a good actor of

the old school, but, like many of his fellows, his own worst enemy. Poor Dick has long since joined the silent majority, and last year his good wife met him on the other side. Let us shed a tear to his memory; but cast no stones, for none of us are without sin."

FIFTH PAPER.

"Good name in man and woman, dear my lord, is the immediate jewel of their souls," murmured the tragedian, and then for a moment he seemed lost in thought.

It was the comedian's opportunity, and he seized it: "Who steals my purse steals trash."

"Me, too, sighed the tall man with asthma.

The Lyceum School man felt that the conversation was drifting in a dangerous direction, but he had thoughtfully put on his other pantaloons that morning, so he resolved to remain during the session.

"And," continued the friend of Forrest, "I might add parenthetically that 'there is a divinity that shapes our ends *rough*—hew them how we will.' I am aware that mine is not the accepted rendering of this oft-quoted paragraph, yet it is a reading that is instructive as illustrating how as small a thing as a misplaced comma may paraphrase panegyric and pervert philosophy."

The comedian scratched his fat chin thoughtfully, and remained discreetly silent, feeling, no doubt, that the conversation had drifted a little beyond him. The Lyceum School man made a pencil mem. on an envelope, and the tragedian continued:

"I had contemplated for to-day a sail upon the noble Hudson, aye, even to the capital of our Empire State, where Mr. O'Flannagan, Mr. O'Gaff, Mr. O'Gunn, Mr. O'Gall, Mr. McGlue, Mr. McSwag and Mr. O'Boodle do make laws for the government of the free and untrammelled American citizen. But when I visited my father's brother with a view to furthering this design, there appeared between that relative and myself a difference of opinion as to the relative value of certain collaterals so great as to cause

a temporary abandonment of my plans. And so for the nonce I'll bask in the rosy noon-day sun, and hie me to the inviting green that glints athwart the Rialto."

"Speaking of a sail upon the Hudson," began the man with the duster, "reminds me of an incident that occurred—"

"In Sacramento?" asked the fat comedian.

"No, sir," continued the man with asthma, "this one ante-dates even the days of '49. Indeed it takes us way back into the thirties, and it has come down to me through two generations. Uncle Ben Baker is my sponsor for this one: Among the early exponents of the drama in this country was the Chapman family, the grand-parents of the present generation of that family, now doing honorable service in various branches of the profession. At the time under consideration the Chapmans had a theatre of their own. It was not exactly built upon the sand, but upon a flat-boat, and floated with the current from town to town along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. The guild was little better than vagabonds then. No private cars, no special trains, no palace hotels, no gilded temples of Thespis. It was a daily struggle, and some

days a very hard one, for the necessaries of life. The players, of course, lived on the boat, and in the absence of money were frequently obliged to take vegetables, eggs, poultry, etc., for tickets. Mrs. Chapman sold tickets and played the heavy leads. She had a little office on the bow of the boat, with bins and compartments for receiving the merchandise, and directly over her head was a little sliding trap-door, which opened into a chicken coop on the roof. One evening about 1835, Chapman's Theatre was tied to a stake near the boat landing at New Madrid, Mo. The play was to be Othello. John Stith was the Othello and Wm. Wharem the Iago. Times were hard and money scarce, but green corn, eggs and chickens came in plentifully, and many times had Mrs. Chapman before going back to dress for Emelia, opened the little door over her head, and pushed a nice fat pullet into the coop.

"Wharem was a devoted fisherman, and at almost any hour of the day or night could be found on the outer edge of the boat angling for cat-fish. In those days there were cat in the Mississippi weighing from twenty to seventy pounds, and one of them once fastened to the

monster hook, it required both skill and strength to land him. The stage was on the rear of the boat, and this night Wharem was fishing directly opposite the R. I. E., his seat not more than four feet from the stage. He had fished the entire afternoon without a bite, and after dressing for Iago he went at it again.

"The colored boy, who was 'general utility' about the boat, would hold the line when Wharem went on for his scenes. The curtain went up on the third act, and Wharem heard his cue for entering with Othello. He looked for the boy, but he was gone; again the cue was given and there wasn't a thing at hand to which he could make fast his line, and he couldn't afford to let it go, so bending down he tied the end firmly about his ankle and rushed on the stage just in time to catch his cue on the third repeat. 'Sweet wench, perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee, and when I love thee not chaos is come again,' quoth Othello. Then he crossed left, and caught his foot in Iago's fish-line. 'What in h— is that?' growled Stith, and Iago answered 'my fish-line.' 'Did Michael Cassio, when you wooed my lady, know of your love?' 'Oh, yes, and

went between us very oft,' said Othello. Then he started to cross, but saw the fish-line and remained in left corner. Iago began to get his work in now, and had just said, 'Beware, my lord, of jealousy, it is the green-eyed mons—' when his right leg went out from under him like a shot. He gathered himself quickly and tried it again: 'monster that doth make the meat it feeds'—and then came a succession of quick, savage jerks at Iago's leg, which nearly upset him a second time. Determined not to lose his fish Whareem interpolated: 'My lord, I fear that in my great love I have gone too far. (Jerk! jerk!) I will leave you one moment to your thoughts, anon I will return.' And reaching down he grabbed the line and rushed for the side of the boat. And then the fun commenced. Othello sat down, buried his face in his hands, and waited for Iago to land his game. Cassio, Roderigo and Desdemona eagerly watched the struggle. Finally the monster cat, after pulling as though he weighed a ton, suddenly changed his tactics, jumped clear of the water and landed on the boat. The sudden slacking of the terrible tension took Iago so completely by surprise that he staggered back

and fell his length on the stage, in full view of the audience, dragging the forty-pound cat fish after him."

"Did Uncle Ben furnish you with any data or circumstantial evidence of the historical accuracy of this cat-fish story?" asked the tragedian.

"Not exactly; he simply jotted the points down from memory on a Fund letter-head."

"That is *of-fish-al*," said the comedian, but the painful stillness with which the remark was received convinced him that it was ill-timed.

"But the funniest part of the performance came afterward," continued the man with the duster. "Between acts Emelia and Brabantio slipped out to count up, or, rather, weigh up, the receipts. They found two dollars and ten cents in cash, twenty-two watermelons, three dozen eggs, and a small supply of sweet potatoes and green corn. Every seat was filled. 'There must have been a big run on chickens to-night,' said Brabantio Chapman, seeing the meagre assets in other directions. 'Indeed there was,' replied Emelia; 'there must be at least fifty nice fat pullets in the coop.' Papa Chapman rushed up to get a look at them, and

horror of horrors! the c^oop was empty! And what do you suppose those miserable New Madridians had done? They had 'faked' one pullet on the old lady all the evening, using a little bare-footed nigger to slip up over the stern of the boat and steal it out as fast as she put it in, and when the whole town was in the nigger stole the chicken on his own account and went home.

"Both Mr. and Mrs. Chapman were good Methodists, but it is reported that the atmosphere about that flatboat became suddenly blue when the true inwardness of the scheme dawned on the old gentleman. 'And to think that these miserable Missouri heathens should be quietly enjoying a Shakespearian masterpiece, played as only the Chapmans can play it, for two dollars and ten cents cash and twenty-three watermelons! D—n 'em! But I'll be even with 'em!'

"The curtain had just rung up on the fourth act, and the old man slipped his cables and pushed his 'temple of Thespis' out into the current and went on with the play. Just before the curtain fell on the last act he pushed in shore and made fast, and that audience had to walk home ten miles through a swamp."

"In more serious vein," said the tragedian, "I feel called upon to intimate to you that my time of rest and recreation is nearing its end, and these, our pleasant confabs, our soulful intermingling of facts and fictions of our noble guild, past and present, must soon be numbered among the treasured stores of memories. Possibly our next gathering will be the last until the warm suns of another June shall draw to this busy mart the wandering children of Thespis."





SIXTH PAPER

HE TAKES LEAVE OF HIS COMPANIONS WITH A FEW PARTING SHOTS AT FOLLY AS SHE FLIES—A TOUCH OF PATHOS—THE STORY OF A LIFE.

"I feel," said the tragedian seriously, "that I have been a victim of that 'vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself and falls on t'other side?' During my last year's tour with the Crummels'

Tragic Aggregation, I met at Jincksville, Iowa, an elderly commercial tourist of the Hebrew persuasion, hailing from this great city. He had that night witnessed my Virginius, and he felt called upon to say to me that my performance, though miserable and meagre in its surroundings, had at times forcibly reminded him of 'the noblest Roman of them all,' Forrest, whom he had known and greatly admired. He assured me that in the metropolis there was a dearth of genuine ability. 'In point of fact,' said my friend, 'New York is hungry for a good actor,' and so I came. During my year's sojourn in and about the metropolis I have learned many things. My friend may or may not have been right regarding New York's theatrical appetite, but if she hungers, it's a hunger manifestly that does not crave Roman fathers, melancholy Danes or vengeful Moors, and so, having no revenue but my good spirits to feed and clothe me, I have, in lieu of the umber of Othello, donned the cork of Uncle Tom, playing seconds to the jackass.

"Instead of slaying the centurion's virgin daughter in the market place, I have served as a stage mop for the bull-dog in the Barber

Brothers' great canine drama of Foiled Again. Instead of Hamlet's philosophic sea of troubles, I have plunged me in the mammoth tank to rescue the drowning heroine in Bluster's great masterpiece, *The Luring Lights*, or, *The Gaul of Gotham*. And yet my year on the Rialto has not been altogether unfruitful. I have, I trust, acquired some knowledge of modern methods. I have observed that the popular idols write to the morning papers a history of their bright sayings, and tell how they saved the poor author by their ready fund of wit and repartee, and as they have recalled some of their bright *originations, I have recognized them in spite of their crutches and white beards as old friends; and then I have remembered how, when a merry child, with long flaxen curls, my grandfather took me on his knee and told me that same old gag; and I have said to myself, if these misguided geniuses have no friends to admonish them, I will for the nonce play jackass and bray in their ears: 'See that those who play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them;' and while the actors have been telling the public how they pad their bad parts, the ballet girls have been telling how

they pad their bad legs; and in the category with bad parts and bad legs, let me not forget to include the bad English in which they are summarized.

"The ballet girls have told an anxious public, in the Sunday issues, all about their tights and how they fill in the holes to make'em fit. This, it is to be presumed, will be followed by a desertation on knit undershirts; to conclude, probably, with an exhaustive treatise on bureau and other drawers collectively. In the light of these and other incidents that I have noted during my sojourn in the metropolis, I can readily discern that the effete East is approaching to that perfection in matters of light amusement which has heretofore prevailed in Leadville and El Paso. The difference seems to me to be a difference merely of quality and degree—the quality of the beverage and the degree of pretentiousness with which they dish it up. For

Call it by what sounding title ye will,
The stench of the wine room will cling to it still."

"And so you are going back to your old love again!" said the comedian. "Well, old pard, the gang will miss you."

"They will indeed," said the man with asthma, and taking the old actor's hand in both his own, he added with real feeling, "and the few of us who have known you best will miss you most."

The tragedian felt the sincerity of both, and taking a hand of each, pressed them long and tenderly.

"Yes," he said, "I feel lost in the big town, after twenty years on the cross-roads. Crum-mels has written that they want me there, although they don't seem to want me here. We all make our mistakes, if mistakes they can be called. I suppose I made my mistake at the end of the war. I came home with a shattered arm, and a memento of the siege of Vicksburg buried somewhere in my thigh. Had I returned with Fox to the Old Bowery, possibly I might have kept abreast the times. But I had mingled freely with hard-handed, big-hearted men of the West and South; I had fought beside them on many fields, and talked with them by many campfires; and so I grew to love them, and when the end came, I linked my humble destiny with theirs. And now, in the great West, they ask for me again, and I shall go. Truly.

they cannot always give me gilded palaces for play houses, but even from their wooden benches their big human hearts will warm to the Master's thoughts, and so for a moment linger with the poor player striving in his weak way to give them substance. Often the dingy stage will have no light but flickering oil lamps, but where the glowing thoughts of the mighty Bard do breathe and burn, there can be no darkness. I shall not miss the glaring light, the tinsel glitter, nor the hangings of rich satins and velvets, for when I don Othello's robe I shall live for those brief hours in Venice and Cyprus. When Hamlet's inky cloak I wear I shall feel the nipping and eager air on the platform, and wander in feigned madness through the stately halls of Elsinore. True, the next hour finds me again in Jincksville and Rogers Corners, but even there I find kindred souls, men and women who love the drama for the drama's sake, and together we can lay our poor tribute at the shrine of one who wrote for all time and for all conditions of men."

With this last reference to the master, the tragedian lifted his hat reverently and then abstractedly placed it on a beer keg, as he took again the hands of his companions.

"For any unkind word I may have uttered, for any moment's pain I may have caused you, I ask to be forgiven; and let my disclaiming from a purposed evil free me so far in your most generous thoughts that I have shot my 'arrow o'er the house and hurt my brother.'"

"There needs no ghost come from the grave to tell us this," said the tall man. The fat comedian said nothing, but he lifted his hat instinctively, and a tear trickled down his fat cheek. The Lyceum School actor, who had not ventured into the conversation upon this occasion, stood respectfully in the background, with his hat in his hand. The tragedian turned toward the tall man, who was also uncovered, and pressed his hand gently. He seemed about to speak, but the chin quivered, the eye moistened, and there was a moment of eloquent silence in the little group, finally broken by the tragedian.

"Should you at any time hear the old player mentioned in terms of respect or of kindness, say nothing; but if in words of shallow ribaldry, then 'speak of me as I am, nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice.'"

The tall man looked into his companion's

face. It was serious, sad, almost tragic. The lines seemed deeper than usual about the eyes; his hair was white about the roots; his face, almost classic in its delicate beauty, was unusually pale, and it was plainly evident that he was in the throes of a terrible mental struggle. At length he began slowly:

"I am fifty-eight to-day. And in the autumn of life's ceaseless struggle, I find myself poor indeed in worldly goods, but rich in hallowed memories. Something, I know not what, moves me to speak of that which I had thought to carry with me along the silent river. This morning I visited a lonely grave at Cypress Hill. It was overgrown with ivy and wild violets, but no weeds had been allowed to flourish in the sacred soil, for though often lost to sight that grave has always been to memory dear. A modest slab tells the passer that a young mother and her first-born are buried in one coffin there. And there amid the violets I sat, and my mind went back through the changing kaleidoscope of five-and-thirty years. I was a boy again on the old Granite Hills. But mine was a boyhood with few boyish pleasures. My father came of the old Puritan stock, and be-

lieved that this life was but a period of purgation for the life to come. Graduating from Harvard, a stern father's will mapped out my life in grooves as narrow as had been his own. He sought to force me into the ministry, and I had elected to become a player. But something mightier than a father's will had unwittingly taken a hand in the shaping of my destiny. That subtle spell that makes serfs of kings and kings of serfs, had fallen upon me. I had felt the hallowed joy that comes with chaste woman's love. In the scale against such a passion a stern father's threats and a gentle mother's entreaties weighed as nothing; and so we parted—the father to seek justification in his Calvinistic creeds; the heartbroken mother to weep and pray for both; the outcast son to begin his life-battle with only his pride, his manhood and his love.

“For three years the struggle was a hard one, but I had youth and affection to buoy me, and so long as I kept *her* from suffering I was content. And she was so gentle, so loving and so hopeful. At last my recognition came, and with it assured position and prospective triumphs; and oh, the joy that filled our young

hearts! It was such a joy as comes only to those who have loved, and suffered for that love's sake. One day, upon returning from a rehearsal, she met me in the door of our modest home with a look in her face I had never seen there before. She appeared half shy, half frightened, yet she smiled and held me closely in her loving arms for a moment, then hid her sweet, blushing face on my breast, and then I knew I had two lives to live for. I played Romeo that night to the Juliet of Julia Dean ; and, oh, how I did play it ! My fellow-actors stood wondering in the wings, and the star came to the entrance and applauded me and took me before the curtain at the end of the third act. How little they knew of the source of my inspiration ! During the succeeding months I honestly believe that we were as happy as God has ever permitted two of His children to be ; and through it all there stole a sweet conviction that when the little one came, and we had taught its infant lips to say ' Granma ' and ' Grandpa,' the cruel past would be obliterated, for I was an only child."

The old actor paused and buried his face for a moment in his hands, but no one presumed to speak.

“At last,” he said, through tears he could not keep back, “my day of destiny dawned, and by a strange coincidence it was my own birthday. I left her on a snowy couch, scarce whiter than her own fair skin, and hurried to the theatre, where that night I played a dissipated, worthless rouse. Hurrying home, half dressed, and with my make-up on, I was met on the threshold by a palid face and a warning ‘Sh!’ that froze the marrow in my bones. In breathless silence I stole to her side. The shadow of life’s destroyer was at the bedside; but a sweet smile of recognition greeted me from the verge of the spirit world, and when that smile had faded heaven was richer by two angels.”

If tears have power to cleanse us of our sins, then surely that little group of players was purged of many transgressions during the brief silence that intervened.

The tragedian was first to speak: “And then the wild alarums of dreadful war rang through the land. Our common mother called upon her faithful sons to tear from her throat the clutch of the matricide. What followed you already know. This week, God willing, I shall

visit the home of my boyhood. I shall see the quaint old church where my father read the Law according to the light he had, and where my sainted mother knelt, in firm, implicit faith ; and in the old churchyard I shall kneel and place upon two moss-covered graves the violets and the ivy that I brought to-day from Cypress Hill."

Then taking a hand of each companion in his own, he said impressively : "When that is done, I'll to the West, to storm the barns once more, and e're we meet again, mayhap I shall have shifted to the lean and slippered pantaloons, sans eyes, sans taste, sans teeth, sans smell, sans everything." The rest is silence.



YORICK'S SKULL.

(For the incidents, and a great portion of the narrative contained in the true stories of Yorick's Skull and Hard Times, I am indebted to my old friend James M. Martin, the pioneer actor and journalist.)

THE property man of to-day is too often the pariah of the dramatic profession with no knowledge whatever of "props." His duties seem to be entirely embraced in setting chairs and tables in the wrong place in a very perfunctory manner. The property man of the "palmy days" was an artisan of the highest type and a real power in a theatre. Certain conventional articles were always to be found, even in the poorest establishments, and among them was the skull for Hamlet. This "prop." might be turned out of wood or manufactured of papier mache. Large turnips deftly carved, and I have known of a pumpkin neatly sculptured and painted, to do duty as Yorick's cranium. But a real property man never felt that the requirements were complied

with unless he had a real skull for the great tragedy.

In 1868 or thereabouts, Jack Langrishe was to open a new theatre for a long season in Helena, Montana. The company played up the Union Pacific road as far as Corinne, where we were to take transportation for Helena. We learned that the theatre would not be completed for several weeks. The ladies were sent on ahead in stage coaches, while the "boys" who wanted to hunt and fish were to follow at their leisure in carriages and mud wagons.

Early one morning, the dramatic outfit heavily loaded, and the boys who had been making merry with the "jolly dogs" of Corinne, also heavily loaded, pulled out to cover six hundred miles between the railroad and Helena.

We had great sport hunting and fishing. Nothing of interest occurred until we got to the Milk Ranch on White-Tail-Deer Creek. J. M. Martin, who was in the company, was one of the early men in Montana. In 1862-'63-'64 that territory was overrun by the most desperate crowd of murderers, assassins and road agents that the world ever saw. The vigilantes organized and hanged them by scores. He was

well acquainted with the various localities of interest, and this very Milk Ranch some years before had an evil reputation. But at the time of which we now speak it had passed into the hands of honorable men. We camped on the creek about a mile from the ranch and turned the mules out. It is said a mule will serve you faithfully twenty years to get a chance to kick your brains out. The conduct of ours had been exemplary; they were always to be found when wanted, and we kept no guard. Martin, by unanimous vote, was elected cook. This dignity involved the disagreeable necessity of turning out before daylight, building a fire and preparing breakfast. When the feast was prepared the tocsin was sounded by beating on a frying pan and the guests assembled. This morning the mules to preserve their record of subtle rascality, had run away. All hands hurried out in pursuit. Logan Paul, Jimmy Griffith, a most useful actor and thorough property man, and Martin, went down the creek. The stream was fringed on either side with a dense growth of willows. The mule is a cunning beast and will often hide in such places. A yell from Logan brought Griffith and Martin to him. Logan

was a boy then, and his nerves were nervous. Standing on the edge of a clump of willows with the perspiration pouring down his pale face, he pointed to the centre of the undergrowth.

"What is it?" they exclaimed.

"In there!" he gasped.

"What's in there; the mules?"

"No," faltered Logan.

"What in —— I ——!! ——!!—— did you call me for!" exclaimed Griffith.

"Is this your idea of a joke?" yelled Martin, who had waded through the icy stream and was shivering.

"Man there!" ejaculated Logan.

"Man!" they echoed. "What's he done to you?"

"Nothing," replied Logan, "he's dead!"

"Dead!" They rushed into the willows, in the centre of a thick clump, was a portion of the skeleton of a large man which had been burned away from the hips to the middle of the ribs. From the place where the remains were found and their position, this could hardly have been accidental. Scraps of the under and upper clothing, scattered around, were of extra

fine quality. The boots, in which remained the desicated feet and legs, were of the fashionable high-heeled California manufacture. The remaining portions of the frame were denuded of flesh, and had evidently been there a long time. But the object of interest was the skull, which was large and symetrical. The teeth were beautiful, complete, sound and regular, with the exception of a few in front on the left side which were worn slightly concave, the result, as we imagined, of holding a clay pipe there when smoking. No papers or effects of any kind could be discovered. In spite of persistent inquiries aided by the press, nothing could be learned of him. After mature deliberation we concluded to leave the remains as they were, and report at Helena. Griffith, however, had an artistic eye to business. He wanted a first-class tragic skull for Hamlet, a skull with a romance and a history connected with it.

"Why," he declared with enthusiasm, "I might hunt the earth over, and never find such a prop as this. Of course, this ain't the original Yorick's skull, and I'm sorry for it, but it may be one of his descendants. He's evidently

a Scandinavian, judging from the light sandy hair I find here."

Griffith took possession of the relic. We camped that night on the summit of Boulder Pass. For companionship and comfort the boys selected partners who slept together. With the cautious foresight of old mountain men, Griffith and Martin, who were "pards," stretched a canvas over the tongue of their wagon and enjoyed the protection of a dog tent. Yorick's skull, as it was named, was placed for safety under the wagon at the foot of the bed. Yorick's fate, his name, and all pertaining to his history was the subject of conjecture around the camp fire that night, until by a natural association of ideas the immortality of the soul and a future life became the topic of discussion. All shades of belief, from certainty of a life hereafter, to positive materialism, were developed. A violent theological squabble ensued, acrimonious and uncharitable, as such discussions usually are. The violent and dogmatic were, as is generally the case, ignorant and positive. They mistook their bitter prejudices for arguments, and incoherent howlings for unanswerable truths. The skull lay beneath the

wagon grinning at them, illumined by the camp fire. I almost expected to hear a sarcastic laugh, and a hollow voice proceed from it saying: "Fools! you will all know in time!" But the death's head, the only authority that could have settled the argument, was silent and grinned alike at wisdom and folly.

Strange to say, the champion who was certain of his immortality, expressed doubt concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures. Like many others who babble much, for and against them, he had never read them. But by expressing doubt he left his argument, and himself too, open to annihilation. The controversy immediately dropped from the etherial heights of immortality to dull earth, and became of the earth, earthy. Mud was thrown, verbal mud of course, when Martin, by the power in him vested as Chief Cook and Autocrat of the camp, consequently *ex officio* Speaker, Chairman, Moderator and High-Muck-a-Muck, arising from his throne, (an inverted camp kettle), and brandishing his sceptre, (a soup ladle), shouted "Order! This theological discussion will end in a fight! You may hammer the devil out of a man, but its impossible to thump brotherly love and the

gospel of peace into him. As a stage manager I have experienced myself, and seen in others, considerable confusion of thought, but this controversy is a huckleberry over my persimmon ; its absolute verbal chaos ! You," he continued, pointing to the orator who felt himself to be immortal, "doubt the Scriptures. You believe in a life hereafter, but reject the only proof you have of it. Immortality can only be proven in two ways. A man you know to be dead must return to you alive—I mean you individually, for the testimony of another is of no consequence. However truthful and honest he may be, in this matter it is of no value. The departed one must prove by words or acts that he is alive—a genuine fact, and not an illusion ; or you must accept as truth the Book which declares life everlasting to be a fact. In the latter case the testimony of your senses cuts no figure, for you have no such testimony—your belief rests on faith. No dead man has ever returned to tell you, or perhaps any of us, the secrets of the hereafter. Should Yorick then, at this moment, open his mouth to enlighten us, the chances are that those of us who did not drop dead of fright, would strike out for tall timber

without waiting to hear what he might have to say. Thinking as you do, neither logic, induction, analogy or deduction, will aid you or any one to solve this problem, unless you accept the revealed word, for without it you have, so to speak, no solid ground whereon to plant the sole of your mental foot. All arguments outside of it amount only to this: 'All peoples in all ages hope for and expect life hereafter. So universal is the belief that the soul is immortal, that it may be termed a law inherent in the constitution of the human mind.' I will say here, that some sceptics might insist that, before you provide for the immortality of the soul, it will be needful to prove you have a soul. Try it without the aid of revelation and you will soon discover what a muddle you are in. But, you that insist upon the passionate desire for immortality, or a desire to live hereafter, as being an argument in favor of that doctrine, only state one-half of the true proposition. The other half is this: 'The love of life and horror of death is inherent not only in man but the lower animals. Paradoxical as it may appear, they suffer death to escape it. While man has a hope amounting to conviction of life beyond the

grave, nevertheless he will suffer untold misery to remain in this life. In short the desire to live here, in more or less pain, misery, and discomfort, is infinitely greater than the wish for a happy hereafter. Your intense, inherent desire for life hereafter, or anything else, is no proof that it exists, or that you would enjoy it if it did. I frequently have an ardent desire to fly, but that don't give the ability to do it. I'm not built that way. You want to be an angel, but you are not built that way, if you rely on your present argument for the fact. You have the same logical grounds for thinking that because you have a horror of death you will not die, as you have for believing that because you have an ardent desire for immortal life you will be immortal. How about Moses? In his legislation he says nothing about immortality. He was brought up by Egyptians, and the doctrine of immortality of the soul—not only of man, but of cats and onions, bugs, birds and beasts—was interwoven with the customs of their daily life. I don't know what he thought on the subject, or whether he thought at all. Perhaps he regarded it as a self-evident truth that it would be absurd to mention. We don't make

it a matter of solemn record that the sun shines, that water is wet, that fire burns, nor did Moses perhaps lay any stress on a doctrine which it is possible no human soul in his age ever thought of disputing. The belief of mankind proves nothing whatever. Now, fellers, in conclusion, as it is perfectly obvious you don't know what you are talking about, I move we go to roost, as this train will have to be rolling at daylight. Come, Griffiths! If any message arrives from the other world via Yorick's skull we will be the first to hear it, and we'll enlighten the community.

The full moon was shining with a radiance only to be witnessed in the clear mountain air, but the timber on the peaks miles away was afire, while the blue smoke which had settled on the divide and in the valleys created a weird vapory effect which was magical. Objects near at hand appeared distorted, while those further away assumed the fantastic shapes peculiar to the mirage. Soon the camp was wrapped in slumber. About two o'clock in the morning Martin awoke half frozen. His faithful partner Griffith, by a gentle rotary movement at which he was an adept, had appropriated all the

blankets. Seizing the bed clothes and raising himself on his elbow preparatory to giving a surge which would have stripped Griffith, he happened to cast his eyes toward the foot of the bed; there in the misty light lay the skull with its cavernous eyes and ghastly grin facing him; a cricket which had found a home there, chirping at that moment, sent a cold chill through him. Looking further, in a direct line from the death head about a hundred yards away, as near as could be judged by the struggling moonlight, was the figure of a man obscurely visible. Martin thought at first it was one of the party, but when he came out from beneath his shelter and stood erect, the man, or whatever it may have been, had disappeared. Thinking he might have been mistaken he crawled into the dog tent again, when behold! the object again appeared. He glanced at the skull; the stereotyped smile seemed to broaden, while the cricket in a murmuring chirp seemed to chuckle at the ghostly joke. As Martin described it, a sort of electric chill—a compound of the shock of a battery and a shower bath—paralyzed him for a moment. Closer inspection revealed the fact that the man appeared to be

standing with his legs wide apart, his arms extended and somewhat upraised, as if hurling an anathema, but *his head was wanting*. In a sort of desperation he seized his pistol and crawled out again, but the instant he stood erect the phantom vanished. Fully convinced that Yorick had come back after his skull, he was about to invite him to advance and take it, when the suspicion of appearances, characteristic of men who have been much on the frontier and in hostile Indian countries—and Martin had been many years there—restrained him. Horse thieves or Indians might be prowling around and he determined to reconnoitre. In his excited condition it would have been scarcely healthy for any one, friend or foe, to have come on him suddenly, as he would certainly have shot him. After a careful survey nothing nearer human than a mule was found, and he returned in a very perturbed state of mind. As he stood near the skull, a wolf on an adjacent rock gave a piercing howl, which for the moment seemed to proceed from Yorick's lips. The cayotes took up the cry and far in the distance the dismal melody echoed and re-echoed through the mountains. Horrors began to

accumulate. A lonely owl joined in the chorus with his melancholy hooting. "Well, this beats hell a mile," ejaculated the sentinel. "What's that?" said a hollow voice which appeared to issue from the skull under the wagon. It was Griffith whom the cayotes had awakened. "I'll tell you," replied Martin as he crawled in under the dog tent. No sooner had he reached the couch than the "spook" appeared.

"Griffith, look out under the wagon and tell me whether *you* can see anything?"

He did as desired. "Yes! I see some one standing out there."

"What's he doing?" asked Martin.

"Nothing except holding out his arms and"—He suddenly stopped. His eyes seemed ready to burst out of their sockets. Without removing them from the object of his gaze he began to feel around for his pistol.

"Well, what's the matter with you?"

"Nothing is the matter with me," replied Griffith, "but that fellow out there's *got no head!* I'll be blown if it aint Yorick!"

"You're shouting," gasped Martin. "He's come back after his head!"

"By thunder, he won't get it," muttered Grif-

fith grabbing his pistol. "I want it in my business worse than he does."

"Whenever I go to look for him he vanishes," said Martin. "See if you have any better luck." Griffith went outside, but the goblin disappeared as before.

"Well," he exclaimed when he returned, "I don't believe in ghosts, but this lays over anything I ever saw."

"It's an optical illusion, or else a mental delusion," replied Martin, "and taken in connection with that skull, if I was here alone I don't think my sand would hold out long enough for me to investigate the phenomenon, but as I have a company at my back, if he, she, it, or whatever the dickens it is, should lock horns with me, come to my rescue before it walks my log. Griffith, sit on the bed while I walk out in the direction of the mysterious visitor." As before, the goblin vanished when he started for it.

"Do you see him, Griffith?"

"Yes."

"Has he moved?"

"No."

"I can't see hide nor hair of him," continued Martin. "Am I in a line with him?"

"Yes, keep straight ahead, your going for him." Martin continued on until Griffith shouted, "You've got him! He's right in front of you!"

As Martin confessed, when he heard this announcement, his heart almost quit work and his lungs were seized with ague. With revolver on full cock he looked cautiously around but could see no one, although the foggy light gave the shrubs and rocks a weird unnatural appearance; nothing like a headless man was apparent.

"I can't see anyone," shouted Martin.

"He's there beside you!" returned Griffith.

"Is this him?" replied Martin, pointing to two small trees near at hand.

"That's him."

"Griffith, come here," shouted Martin. Griffith came clad in the picturesque costume of an ancient Roman citizen—a short shirt and a pair of slippers.

"Make a note of this on the tablets of your memory," said Martin.

"While memory holds her seat in this dis-

tracted globe, I shall not forget to remember it," he replied.

"These unconscious trees are Yorick's ghost, the first and last ghost you will probably ever see."

Two small trees had grown across each other, which formed the illusion of the legs, two branches on either side represented the outstretched arms, their tops had been broken off, and thus the head of the phantom was wanting. When we were lying down the shrubs were directly on the line of sight and really had some resemblance to a human figure; when we stood up and looked over them the ghostly effect vanished. We returned to our dog tent, the moon was just sinking behind the mountains, and the darkness which preceded the morning was falling. I cast a glance at the skull, the white teeth shone in the uncertain light, and the broad grin fixed forever, seemed to emphasize the joke that our imagination had played us.

A few years later the greater portion of this company became members of the stock company at Wood's museum, Chicago, Griffith and the skull among the number. It is a custom

among property men in the different theatres to help each other out by lending and borrowing. In this way the skull did duty whenever Hamlet was played in Chicago. Davenport, Barrett and Booth in turn patted the bony pate of the Montana Yorick, and pointed to the teeth "where hung those lips that I have kissed, I know not how often," and told how "he hath borne me on his back a thousand times," and asked, "where be thy jibes now?" Could each have known the history of that "prop," how interesting it would have been to have had each pen the inner thoughts that stirred him as busy fancy conjured up a story of its life and death. Perhaps when Booth "played at loggats" with that grinning skull, some fond mother, thousands of miles away, was watching, waiting and praying for that wayward boy, who left her in a fit of passion, and perished at the hands of murdering savages, before sending one word of tenderness or contrition. When matchless Davenport kissed the cold ivory of those teeth, perhaps in a quiet home in some New England village, a pale wife, kneeling at the bed side was holding together two chubby hands and teaching two

baby lips to lisp: "O God, dear God, please send my papa back again." When Barrett stared into the crumbling cavities through which there once had looked a soul, and wondered whether Alexander "smelt so," perhaps in some modest home across the seas a betrothed wife watched for a form that would come no more, and listened for a step that had crossed the trackless river, while seeking in the new world for fame and fortune with which to crown his bride.

Then came the great Chicago fire, and Yorick's skull was destroyed in the theatre. Certainly no fiction could be stranger than the fact that while the body of the unknown was consumed in the wilds of Montana, the skull, the throne of reason, should be reserved for cremation in the greatest conflagration the civilized world has ever known.



HARD TIMES.

“**H**ARD TIMES!” exclaimed the leading man. “The hardest times any of you ever encountered were seasons of profusion and prodigal waste compared to an experience I was the victim of many moons ago. I had just emerged from the humble grub “Bootjack” into the gorgeous butterfly “Walking Gent”—

“No Walking Gents now,” murmured the Comedian, “all Juveniles and Leading Men.”

“Correct! Utility men! By all the Gods, the race is so entirely extinct that not even a fossil is left. But,” continued the speaker, addressing the Comedian, “in all your peregrinations over this sublunary sphere, you have, of course, endured the felicity of having a landlord become so infatuated with your effects as to declare an attachment for your trunks. You have enjoyed the luxury of traveling “tandem” one foot before the other over the unconscious

sleepers of a railroad track. You have had the snide manager evaporate, while the "mourners went about the streets." You have been broke—in fact you've never been otherwise. But you know nothing of hard times, nor can you know, until I relate what befell myself and sundry companions in misfortune in the winter of 1860-61, at Central City, Colorado.

There was a large dramatic company, a variety company, a minstrel company, and enough "tan bouncers" to make a fair circus, caught without a dollar in the bowels of the mountains, six hundred miles from a railroad or navigable stream, with a frozen desert and at least three blood-thirsty tribes of real old-time Indians between them and the States.

Incidentally we had gone there to pursue our various professions. Primarily, to dig for gold. Digging for gold is one thing, and finding it is another. We tried on Clear Creek, Spanish Bar, Boulder and elsewhere, but failed to connect. The good mines were very few. I mean placers. This was before the great Lode mines were discovered, or at least worked. The whole country was broke—there was no such thing as show business. The entire crowd were penni-

less, provisionless, and would have been houseless, if Bill Norwood, stage carpenter of the old National Theatre and a good Comedian besides, had not discovered two miners from his town, Baltimore, who were going down to Mexico for the winter. They let him have a large cabin. Bill put up about thirty bunks and invited the crowd to come in. The ladies of the companies were either sent to the States or comfortably provided for elsewhere. The invitation was unanimously accepted. The actor and the acrobat, the minstrel and variety man, all laid down together, in a delightfully lion and the lamb sort of a manner. But there was not five dollars in the crowd. We had shelter, but no larder. The establishment was christened the Chateaw De Grab, with the sub-title of "Tough Times Ranch." Of those who wintered there, the majority have joined the great majority across the dark river—rest their souls, I hope they've found a brighter shore. There was:

Harry B. Norman,
Sam D. Hunter,
Mike J. Dougherty,
James C. Whitall, and

John Jack, not the talented representative of Falstaff, but another man, only known to the far West. Originally he was a Missouri river pilot and personally was a great character, as he was excellent as a peculiar character actor. There was also Dick Wilmot, Ind. Carter, and others, that I know are dead. Chas. H. Irving, Geo. Pardey and Harry Collins, I believe, are alive. I am certain Jas. M. Martin, known in the Western camps as Jimmi Martin, is, as I met him recently on the square. Tom Duncan, a minstrel, was living in St. Joe, Mo. All the rest are scattered or gone.

As I said, we had no provisions, neither had we the wherewithal to purchase the same. Lunch routes were unknown, store-keepers lacked confidence in our ability to pay. A crisis came. The problem was, "die dog or eat a hatchet." It was a case of starve or forage. We decided to forage. Particular people characterized our conduct by another name. Let moralists experience the anguish of such total abstinence as we suffered for a few days, before they begin to fire cobble stones.

Necessity developed the highest order of inventive genius. Chickens and ducks wandered

around the camp, but it wouldn't do to capture them in broad daylight. Their cries, if we laid violent hands on them at night might result seriously. But science surmounted obstacles. The weather was cold, the poultry lodged in trees. Two holes were bored in the ends of a light plank and two long poles inserted in them. The board was then heated before the fire. Two of our number, usually Martin and Duncan, who were light and active, would emerge at midnight, bearing aloft the hot plank. This they hoisted beneath the limb on which the slumbering poultry perched. The grateful heat would inveigle the confiding birds from the cold limb to the comfortable plank. In a moment they would be asleep again. The marauders would quietly march away bearing their trophies aloft in triumph. In the sanctuary of the Chateau the spoil was dispatched, the feathers and compromising evidences cremated, and the feast prepared.

"Nothing very tough about that," remarked the Lyceum man. "You never tackled those chickens. People took to locking up their feathered stock of nights and we were reduced almost to the verge of cannibalism, when a

positive inspiration entered the brain of Charley Irving. The fowls roamed at large during the day. A hook and stout fishing line were provided, the hook was baited with meat. John Jack, being a sailor man, was entrusted with the practical application of the great discovery. He cast the baited hook into the back yard, or wherever a chicken or duck appeared. The guileless fowl would gobble the bait, the man at the line jerked, the prey was hooked, hauled into the cabin and sacrificed. But man cannot live on meat alone; he must have bread. There was but one way to get it—raid the bakers' ovens. They were there built outside the shops. Norwood was selected for this desperate work, because he was a thumper from the old house, and could prevail by mere force of arms. Norm. and Hunter were detailed, on account of superior eloquence and address, to amuse the victim in his shop while Norwood performed the confiscation act. He did his work conscientiously and well—the whole batch, an entire oven full, often rewarded his labor. The rear and knees of his pantaloons often melted off through the fervent heat of the interior of the oven. But we got our daily bread.

When spring came the owners of the cabin returned.

“How have you fared?” they asked.

“Very rocky; been broke all winter,” we replied.

“You’r foolish! Why didn’t you make a raise?”

“Where could we make a raise?” we asked.

“Here,” replied one of them, seizing a shovel and digging down beside the earthen fireplace. In a minute he hauled out two large oyster cans filled with gold dust, which they had hidden there before they had departed.

A dismal howl shook the roof of the cabin. Some fell back in their bunks and fainted.

Talk of hard luck!!!



PENALTY BLOGGS.



OF course, you know Bloggs; everybody knows Bloggs—that is, everybody who is anybody. Bloggs is the man who knows everybody who is anything of a celebrity, and who slaps you familiarly on the back, and calls you by your first name on the slightest provocation. Bloggs in the abstract is to be found in any community of three thousand or more. Bloggs is at his best in small towns, for the reason, I suppose, that small communities can afford but one of him, and he flourishes by reason of his singularity. The particular edition of Bloggs now under consideration I met in a small Texas town, some years ago. He was on the platform at the station as the train pulled in, and by his general air of bustle and officiousness impressed me as being at least a division superintendent. He smiled affably as I passed to a carriage, opened the door pompously, asked, calling me

by name, to what hotel I was going, gave orders to the driver, and then rushed over and grabbed the conductor by the hand, slapped him on the back, said something evidently amusing, as he laughed very loudly himself, although the conductor didn't seem particularly impressed. I was not sure then whether he was division superintendent or only station agent. I had scarcely written my name on the hotel register when Bloggs swelled in. He posed gracefully against a corner of the counter, cast an eye over the signature, and just missed the cuspidor with such remnants of a mouthful of tobacco juice as escaped his shirt and vest in transit. Then he leaned over and whispered to the clerk, who was trying to room me. No, I thought, he is not a railroad man; he is proprietor of the hotel, and he is telling the clerk to give me the bridal chamber. "Front," said the clerk, "twenty-six."

Turning as I reached the stairs, I discovered that my exit was followed by the amiable smile and watery eyes of Bloggs.

Descending to the office a half hour later I discovered that Bloggs was still there. He was leaning against the cigar stand talking to the

newsboy. Yes, I thought, I was right, he is the proprietor, or at least partner, or manager of the hotel. Bloggs "set" me the moment I entered, and smiled affably. I nodded, and passed some remark about the weather. That was enough for Bloggs, and it was the one thing, as I soon learned, which I should not have done. Bloggs grasped me by the hand effusively; then he slapped me on the back and whispered something in my ear, intended, I suppose, to be funny, for he laughed a long, loud laugh, ending with a cough. By this time I had discovered that in the matter of strength it was a stand-off between his grip and his breath. Before I could protest he had yanked me around the office and introduced me by name to five or six people. Then he pulled me into the private office and introduced me to the proprietor of the hotel. When I discovered that Bloggs was not the proprietor, I concluded that he must be the mayor of the town, or at least city marshal. The manager of the opera house entered the office, but before he could reach the register Bloggs had pulled me up in front of him and introduced me after this fashion: "Walker, this is my friend Nobles

—noble by name, noble by nature.” I had been listening to this wretched attempt at a pun for so many years by men of the Bloggs calibre that I knew instinctively he was going to say it and was prepared, as usual, to ignore it, but Bloggs felt that he had made a ten strike, and he laughed a loud and fragrant laugh. Walker called me aside to talk business of a private nature, but a little thing like that had no effect upon Bloggs. As we sat down Bloggs stood familiarly in front of us, interjecting comments and witticisms at regular intervals. Walker suggested an adjournment to the bar; this caused Bloggs to positively glow with amiability, and as we started he wrung in one to the effect that he had “quit drinking—in a measure.” On the strength of the laugh with which he accompanied this ancient gem, we were wafted gently to the bar. I observed that Bloggs took it straight, and in sufficient quantity to show that he wasn’t afraid of it. He also smiled affably at the barkeeper and called him by his first name. I thought the barkeeper did not seem to pay that deference to Bloggs due to the mayor or city marshal, and I fancied that Walker made no special effort to be enter-

taining. Walker drew me aside for a moment. Presently a group of gentlemen entered, and before they had time to decline, Bloggs had grabbed each effusively by the hand, rushed him over and introduced me, calling me familiarly "Nobles," or "Milt." Bloggs never missed a round, and I also noticed the regularity with which he failed to "shout" when his turn came, but, glass in hand, endeavored to get into the crowd and join in the conversation. But the gentlemen seemed to ignore his existence. Still, in spite of what appeared to me a studied slight, Bloggs maintained his good humor, occasionally threw in a verbal gem over the backs of the party, and then laughed long and loud, and looked over in our direction to let us see that they were having a "hell-roaring" time. Presently the party, lifting their hats, withdrew. Bloggs followed to the door, which was accidentally allowed to bang in his face. Bloggs opened it unconcernedly, waved his hand and yelled, "So long, boys," then swelled across the room to entertain us. He apologized for leaving us, but said his old friends would have felt hurt if he hadn't joined them, and then insisted on taking me over to the City

Hall and introducing me to his old friend, the mayor. So, after all, I thought, Bloggs is only city marshal, or may be clerk of the district court. I pleaded other business, and Bloggs said he must give me a letter of introduction to his old friend Col. Tom Ochiltree, of Galveston, and then he proceeded to tell me how often himself and "Col. Tom" had incarnadined the walls and fences of the Texas metropolis. He fumbled in his pocket for the last letter he had from the Colonel, but said he must have left it home on the piano. Then he told me how he had made it lively for his old friends Billy Florence and Fred. Warde in Dallas once. "Just say 'Bloggs—Dallas' to Florence, and see what he will say." Then he slapped us both on the back and laughed until he coughed in our faces. By this time Bloggs had made an impression upon me that I shall carry through life. The impression was not so much upon the sense of reason as of olfaction. The bare remembrance of those outward manifestations of internal decay fill me with feelings more of sorrow than of anger.

The offence to my nostrils I could have endured in silence, but this thing hurt my eyes.

Two gentlemen entering the bar rushed Bloggs for them, intending, doubtless, to introduce them, but Walker quickly pulled me through a side door, and so we escaped to the main hall and hurried off to my room. Once safely inside with the door locked, Walker asked:

"Where did Penalty strike you?"

"Where did *who* strike me?"

"Why, Penalty—Penalty Bloggs."

"Oh," I said, "the man with the aromatic respiration and the agricultural finger nails?"

"Exactly," replied Walker.

"He was at the depot when I arrived and in the hotel as soon as I was. What is he, town marshal?"

"What! Bloggs! Town Marshal! Why, that fellow never did an honest day's work in his life. He blew in here from Indiana with the carpet-baggers just after the war. He tried to run the town for about a month, but he was not long in finding his level. Then he married a soldier's widow who keeps a rail-roader's boarding house down by the depot, and he has been living off her ever since."

"Why do you call him Penalty?"

"Well, you see, Bloggs has a weakness for

celebrities. Actor, railroad magnate, bishop or baseball player are all meat for Bloggs. One summer a temperance lecturer dropped in on us. A temperance lecturer is pretty small game, but it was the dull season, and everything goes with Bloggs. After the lecture, which took place in the basement of the Presbyterian Church, several leading citizens and church members remained to congratulate the lecturer. Bloggs hadn't been able to beat his way in, but he was on hand for the congratulations. He pushed through the crowd, grabbed the lecturer by the hand, put an arm around his neck and told him that his lecture was equal to his dear old friend Gough's. Then he wrung his hand and told one of Gough's funny old chestnuts and laughed until he coughed. The cough hit the lecturer full in the face and he fainted. Bloggs evidently thought he had killed his man, for he slipped out, and when the lecturer recovered he looked about wildly for a moment, then he gasped and then sneezed. The mayor helped him to a chair, and looking about inquiringly, the lecturer asked if the storm was over, and whether that clap struck the assafetida works or only the guano factory.

Then the mayor explained to him Bloggs' great weakness for public men and his great strength in the other direction. 'Oh, I see,' said the lecturer, 'Bloggs is one of the penalties of fame.' 'Exactly,' said the mayor, and Bloggs has been called Penalty ever since."



THE ISAACS-CRUMMELS' BOOM.

COMPILED FROM DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE.

[*Advertisement from New York Herald, May 5, 1885.*]

A YOUNG, GIFTED AND BEAUFIFUL SOUTHERN BELLE, descended from an aristocratic Georgia family, having met with unexpected reverses, has determined upon adopting the dramatic profession as a means whereby to retrieve the shattered fortunes of her honorable family, elevate the stage, and utilize those God-given histrionic powers which her friends feel assured she possesses in an eminent degree. Responsible managers, with capital, desiring an attraction for the coming season, may address

MAMIE CRUMMELS,
847½ Lexington ave. (over Drug Store).

[*Advertisement from the Weekly Blast, May 28, 1885*]

ABE ISAACS, YE WORKING AGENT AND PRESS-MANIP-
ulator, d.sengaged. Bulgeville correspondent *Weekly Blast*
Address this office after June 1st.

[*Weekly Blast, June 4*]

We desire to call the attention of managers to the card of the new and brilliant star, Miss Mamie Crummels. This lady comes of a wealthy California family, and has recently returned from Europe, where she has undergone three years' severe study under French, Italian and English masters. Who will be the lucky manager to secure her?

[*Weekly Blast*, June 4.]

That shrewd and energetic manager, Abe Isaacs, is looking about for a strong attraction for next season. It is whispered Abe has his eye on the beautiful young society star, Mamie Crummels. This would make a strong team!

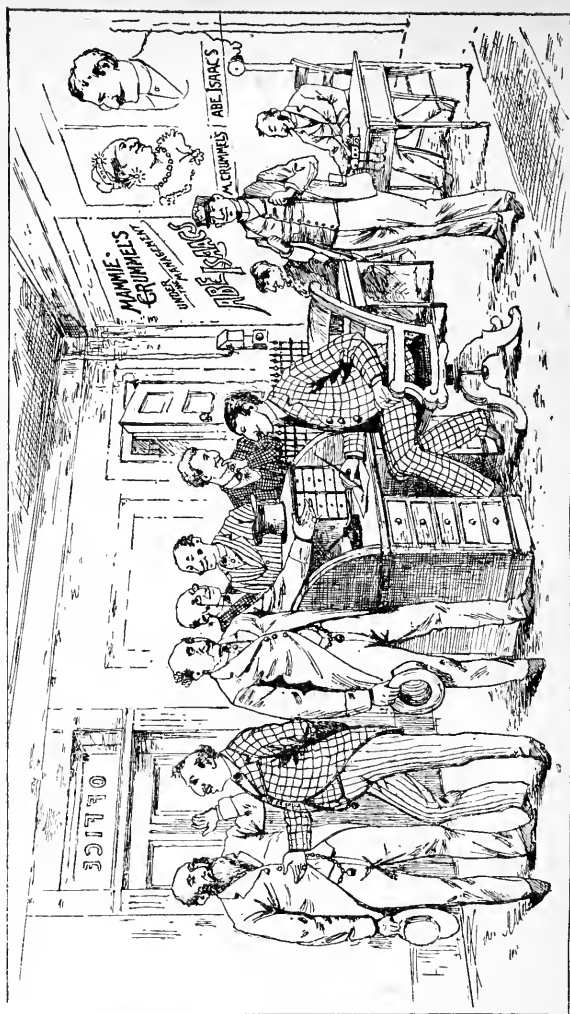
[*New York Correspondence Bilgeville (Iowa) Breakwater*,
June 8].

I yesterday met on Union Square that handsome and popular young Bilgeville boy, Abe Isaacs. Abe is being lionized by the theatrical profession here, among whom he is very popular, having been for some time the Bilgeville correspondent of the *Blast*, the principal theatrical journal. Abe had no sooner arrived in New York than he was besieged on all sides by managers urging him to manage leading combinations. Abe said nothing, but kept his eyes and ears open, and while three other managers were outbidding each other for the new society star, Mamie Crummels, Abe quietly slips in and secures the prize. Miss Cummels is to be congratulated. Abe is a "boomer."

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[*Weekly Blast*, June 8, *Editorial*.]

We call the attention of managers to the mammoth full page advertisement (with portrait of Manager Abe Isaacs), announcing his engagement of the peerless Mamie Crummels. This company will take the road in August, playing the Western and Southern circuits. Mr. Isaacs is negotiating with several New York managers for spring dates. Abe is getting out a magnificent stock of lithographic printing through the well-known house of Ketchum & Holdem. Brains, money and energy will win every time. Abe will wake up some of our Rip Van Winkle managers.

We present this week an admirable likeness of the brainy manager, Abe Isaacs, as he may any day be seen at his office on Twelfth street, working up the approaching tour of his star, Mamie Crummels.

[*Weekly Blast*, June 11.]

The beautiful society star, Mamie Crummels, is quite ill at her exquisitely furnished flat on Lexington avenue. Abe Isaacs, her tireless manager, says it is prostration from over-excitement in recently rescuing the child of a poor

family whose life was endangered by a runaway Bleeker street car.

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[*Long Branch Correspondence New York Courier ,
June 12.*]

The great emotional actress, Mamie Crummels, wears a unique and striking tight-fitting bathing suit of pink and olive-green. Her exquisite figure is much admired. She was visited yesterday by her wide-awake manager, Abe Isaacs.

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[*From the New York Correspondence of the Penn Yan
Bladder.*]

Miss Mamie Crummels, the famed emotional artiste, yesterday rescued three children from drowning at Coney Island. On the same evening she horsewhipped the clerk of the hotel for being a little too previous. Her tireless manager, Abe Isaac's, says the fellow merited his punishment.

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[*From the Harlem Correspondence of the New York
Vindicator.*]

Abe Isaacs, the tireless manager of the young and dashing Southern star, Mamie Crummels,

has filled thirty-eight weeks in the leading Southern and Western theatres.

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Abe Isaac's has purchased from the eminent New York journalist and dramatic critic, Col. Mulligan Bilkes, (late of the *Globe*), his powerful emotional and society drama, entitled *The Love of a Lioness*; or, *Blood for Blood*. Abe says the leading role will fit his star like a glove. Abe ought to know.

[*From the Weekly Blast, June 18*]

Abe Isaacs, accompanied by the beautiful Mamie Crummels, will sail on the *Alaska*. They will spend a month in Paris, procuring a set of costumes from Worth for Miss C's approaching starring tour.

[*From the Weekly Blast, June 23.*]

Editor New York Weekly Blast:

DEAR SIR:—Please allow me space through the columns of your widely-read journal (the only original recognized organ of our profession), to contradict the annoying rumor about Miss Mamie Crummels going to get married to a Cuban Duke. She has got no such intention.

I have got her on a four year's contract, forbidding either one to marry.

Yours in haste,

ABE ISAACS,

Manager of the Great Mamie Crummels, Long Branch.

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The printing and lithographic work for Mamie Crummels' starring tour, designed by Abe Isaacs, will beat anything on the road. Abe says he intends to paralyze the gawks.

[*From the Blast, June 28.*]

CALL.

The ladies and gentlemen engaged for the great Abe Isaacs' Combination, supporting the bewitching Mamie Crummels, are notified that the season will begin at Bilgeville, Ia., August 22. Rehearsal August 15. No fares advanced.

ABE ISAACS, Manager.

Sol. Cohen, Programmer and Press Agent.

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[*From the Bilgeville Breakwater, August 15.*]

Our enterprising fellow townsman, Abe Isaacs (late clerk at Openheimer's clothing house), has arrived from New York. Abe has

become one of the leading lights in the show business. He is busy arranging for the opening of his season in this, his native city, on the 22d. The principal members of the company have arrived, including the young and beautiful star, Miss Mamie Crummels (a Southern belle), who is quartered at Ben Bragg's Delmonico Hotel. Abe is chuck full of business.

[*From the Bilgeville Evening Bugle, August 16.*]

An unusual number of queer specimens of the *genus humo* in long hair, soft hats, linen dusters and seedy pants, leads us to surmise that "the great aggregation of New York star artists" (from the Fifth Avenue Theatre) has arrived.

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[*From the Bilgeville Breakwater, August 23.*]

ABE ISAACS' COMBINATION.

MAMIE CRUMMELS, AMERICA'S GREATEST TRAGEDY
QUEEN, AT OPENHEIMER'S GRAND OPERA
HOUSE, LAST NIGHT.

The elite of Bilgeville assembled last night at the Grand to welcome America's greatest artiste, Miss Mamie Crummels. The show was first-rate. Some of the actors were not "up" in

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ANOTHER IMPOSITION ON THE PUBLIC.

Bilgeville has been called upon to endure many afflictions in the shape of alleged shows,

but last night's fizzle "yanked the bun." From America's greatest down to the humblest supe, not one person on the stage knew their part. The curtain persisted in falling at all sorts of odd time, excepting the right time. The lights went out in the last act, instead of the first, as they should have done, in charity to the audience and actors. That epitome of monumental gall and superfluous idiocy, Abe Isaacs, attempted to make a speech, but was appropriately squelched by the three boys on the front bench. The young, beautiful and accomplished star of the evening proved to be an unmitigated fraud—dark, fat and forty-odd, with a matronly and Hebrewic cast of features. There were about twenty men and boys in the house all told. This was to be expected, when we remember that the enterprising (?) manager failed to advertise in the *Evening Bugle*, the only paper read by the better class of Bilgevillers, and to which they refer as an authority on show matters. This, however, has had no influence upon our criticism.

[*From the Bilgeville Breakwater, August 24.*]

ANOTHER DRAMATIC TREAT AT THE OPERA HOUSE.

Romeo and Juliet was acted last night by the great Mamie Crummels in first-class style. The

indefatigable Abe Isaacs had secured four additional lamps for the stage and two for the hall, thereby adding greatly to the brilliancy of the scene. The sceneries worked much better, excepting where the board representing the balcony scene fell over, exposing the construction of the scene. Miss Crummels acted Juliet to the life. We can well believe Mr. Isaacs when he says on his bills, printed at this office, that the great English tragedian, G. Golding, pronounced Miss Crummels' Juliet a startling exhibition. In the graveyard where she talks about her father's bones and things, she beats Maggie Mitchell, whom the writer saw act the same play at Des Moines, last winter. As she fell on Romeo's prostrate form, Judge Suggs, who had entered and taken a front seat, exclaimed, impressively, "Great God!" Everybody done first-rate, especially Billy Morton, who acted out Peter in a way to bring down the house. Billy is a button-buster, sure. The crowd was not quite so large as on Monday, owing probably to the illness of Colonel Bloodgood's infant son, which has cast a temporary gloom over our best society. We are pleased to add that Willie is better. In addition to this

there was a meeting of the Democratic campaign committee, at the office of Judge Suggs, candidate for legislator, over Malloy's sample room. The hall will doubtless be crowded to-night, when the same great play will be repeated by special request.

[*From the Bilgeville Evening Bugle, August 24*]

There was another amusing exhibition at Openheimers old hall last night. We thought we had seen the acme of badness on Monday night, but last night discounted it. We doubt if so much gratuitous imbecility could be got together in any community in America outside of the idiotic asylums. The appearance of the very fat and very middle-aged lady (America's greatest) who acted the young and tender Juliet, was the signal for a wild laugh from the three boys on the front bench, who distributed the vilely-printed programmes during the day. But an awful stillness reigned when Mr. Sol Cohen, the "press manipulator" of the company, came forward to announce that owing to the sudden indisposition of Mr. R. Macready Spofford, the character of Romeo would be assumed at a moment's notice, by the Bilgeville

favorite, Mr. Abraham Isaacs, of the Hebrew Thespian Society. This announcement was followed by a rush for the door of thirteen of the eighteen composing the audience, the writer among the number. We felt instinctively the need of a stimulant. We got back just in time to see the balcony (two of Openheimer's shutters) fall over, lighting on Abe's ampie feet, and exposing the fat and formidable Juliet standing on a flour barrel, the head of which suddenly refused to sustain its lovely load, precipitating the massive Juliet as far into the barrel as her æsthetic development would permit. The curtain fell upon this unique tableau, and we departed, satisfied that if Shakespeare could see that performance he would be glad that he was dead. We are informed that the three programme boys, the critic of our esteemed and harmless contemporary, and Judge Suggs, who was sleeping off his "ratifications," remained to the bitter end. For the sake of art we hope that Abe will not be discouraged by this incident. He is not the first great artist who has failed in Romeo. In fact, there has not been a really successful Romeo in the show business since the famous elephant died.

[*From the Bilgeville Breakwater, August 29.*]

A SAD DISAPPOINTMENT.

The audience that assembled at the Opera House on Saturday night to witness the closing performance of the great emotional artiste, Mamie Crummels, were doomed to disappointment. The play to be acted was called "The Love of a Lioness," or, "Blood for Blood," written by the eminent New York journalist, Col Mulligan Bilkes, editor-in-chief of *The Herald*. At about a quarter before nine Mr. Isaacs came out and announced that owing to the non-arrival of the elaborate new sceneries and costumes from New York, the play could not be presented. This closed the season of the company in this city for the present. They go from here to Rogers' Corners, where it is to be hoped they may do well. Mr. Ben Bragg, proprietor of Bragg's Delmonico Hotel, has been so deeply impressed with the great histrionic powers of Miss Crummels that he has paid Abe Isaacs a handsome bonus for an interest in the company, and will send Bob along to represent his interest. Mr. Isaacs has given ample security for his printing bill, and we

commend this company to the press and public of Rogers' Corners.

[*From the Bilgeville Evening Bugle, Aug. 29.*]

LAST SCENE OF ALL.

THE GREAT ISAACS-CRUMMELS' BUBBLE HAS
BUSTED.

The internal troubles that have been brewing during the week culminated on Saturday night, when several members of the company refused to play unless they saw the color of Abe Isaac's money. The audience were told that such as had purchased their tickets could get their money at the door; but as all ten of the audience were deadheads, the ceremony was dispensed with. It is rumored that the remnant of this demoralized army will attack Rogers' Corners next week. This is a good thing for Bilgeville, but it's rough on Rogers' Corners. Fortunately (for the company) the distance to Rogers' Corners is short and the walking good. Mr. Macready Spofford, the leading heavy actor of the company, will remain in this city and give a reading next week, after which he will instruct our local amateurs. He says he will rejoin Edwin Booth as leading support next

season. "Billy" Morton, who is a better typo than actor, will "sub" on the *Bugle* until he is telegraphed for by Mary Anderson's manager. Ben Bragg has become greatly attached to this company. In fact, he has several attachments, and Bob will go along to Rogers' Corners to assist Abe Isaacs in relieving them—by selling tickets while Abe tends door.—*Sic transit gloria.*

[*Bilgeville Correspondent Weekly Blast*, August 26.]

Abe Isaacs' great company, supporting the great Mamie Crummels, has taken Bilgeville by storm. Abe is a Bilgeville boy, and a worker. In less able managerial hands the success of the season would have been doubtful, as Bilgeville has been overrun with snide shows. Abe has been offered the management of several leading combinations, but says he has a fortune in his present attraction. Abe swears by the *Blast*.

Bob Bragg has returned to the city.—*Bilgeville Breakwater*, Sept. 5.

The veteran theatrical manager, Abraham Isaacs, Esq., is among the latest arrivals in Bilgeville. Abe's No. 6 hat and No. 11 boots

will in the future adorn their old familiar haunt in front of Openheimer's clothing store. Never mind, Abe. 'Tis better to have loved and lost than to be euchered on a bob-tail flush.
—*Bilgeville Evening Bugle.*

[*A few cards from the Blast, Sept. 15.*]

R. MACREADY SPOFFORD, HEAVY LEAD, DISENGAGED.
Address this office, or Bilgeville, Ia.

BILLY MORTON, LOW COM. BIZ., DISENGAGED. Address this office, or *Bugle*, Bilgeville, Ia.

MR. AND MRS. SEPTIMUS SAUNDERS, FOPS AND IN-
genue, disengaged. Address this office, or Rogers' Cor-
ners, Ia.

HORATIO CLIFFORD, JUVENILE; BESSIE ALMONT, WALK-
ing lady, and little Eva and Sadie, the juvenile wonders,
disengaged. Address this office, or Rogers' Corners, Ia.

[*From the New York Globe, Editorial, Sept. 15.*]

Miss Mamie Crummels has been compelled by failing health to relinquish her starring season in the West and South, which began most auspiciously. Miss C. arrived in this city during the present week and will take a much needed rest. She speaks in glowing terms of her reception in the principal cities of the West. She will resume her season about December 10 with a stronger and better support, and a new drama of thrilling contemporaneous interest by an eminent Western journalist, entitled: "Little

Rose-Bud, the Lily of the Plains, or, The Dew-Drop of Gory Gulch."

[*Advertisement from the New York Herald, Sept. 22.*]

THE eminent, emotional and tragic star, Mamie Crummels, will give instructions to ladies and gentlemen in elocution and stage art. Metropolitan engagements guaranteed. Call at 847½ Lexington Ave., over Drug Store.

And the woods are full of 'em.



"GEORGE."

GEORGE was a dog. There is nothing particularly new or startling in the mere statement, but there are dogs and dogs. George was not particularly distinguished from other dogs in point of physical beauty. Candor compels the admission that in the matter of personal appearance George was plebeian. In point of fact George was what would be vulgarly called a "yaller dog." George's great specialty was mind, and it was in this particular that he rose superior to other dogs of my acquaintance. George was one of my "palmy day" companions. I have many remembrances, pleasant and otherwise, of my "palmy day" experiences, but none more vivid or interesting as a retrospect than my too brief acquaintance with George. We met each other in Denver, in 1869. On the corner where the famous Tabor block now challenges the wonder and admiration of the tourist, stood an old two-

story frame hotel, known as the Boardwell House. On the corner directly north, where another structure rears its seven granite stories, there was a sand-hill, and on the top of that sand-hill was a long, low frame structure known as the Denver Theatre. A merry band of players was holding forth at the Denver Theatre, and such leisure as study and rehearsals left us was devoted to foot-racing, quoit-pitching, riding the festive bronchos, or luxuriating on the benches in front of the old Boardwell, swapping lies. It was while developing my imagination in the latter occupation that my acquaintance with the hero of this true tale began. The chance acquaintance, which afterward ripened into intimacy, began entirely *sans ceremonie*. It was this way: I was on the outer edge of the board sidewalk, propped back against a tree-box, telling Jimmie Martin and George Waldron of my early St. Joe and Omaha triumphs, when I was interrupted by a fearful "yelp," and simultaneously a mangy, colorless cur dropped into my lap. My seat was directly opposite the open door of the bar-room. The dog, driven desperate by the cravings of the inner dog, had sneaked

into the bar-room to snatch a piece of cracker from the floor, when the eagle eye and number nine boot of the bar-keeper fell upon him, with the result above described. My chair careened gracefully, depositing me in the gutter, from which vantage-ground I could see and hear my canine surprise party flying up the road on three legs. A half hour later I was going through a "carpenter scene" with the low comedian, when the familiar "yelp" again greeted me. I rose instinctively to see my mangy friend flying for his life from a big overgrown cur dog. The race ended by my hero taking shelter under the wooden steps of the theatre, where his pursuer could not follow him. The following day, at about the same hour, the familiar signal of distress again rent the air, this time accompanied by the rattling of an oyster can attached to the end of the dog opposite to the yelp. Again the theatre steps afforded an asylum of refuge. By this time I had become interested in this dog. I coaxed him from under the steps, divided him from the can, took him into the theatre, and for the first time had a good look at him. That dog was a study. Could his pedigree have been

traced, I have no doubt it would have revealed the mingled bloods of the entire canine family. His legs were short and his body was long. His head was abnormally large, and his body was thin. About the head and face he had the shaggy yellow hair of a terrier. One ear had evidently been chewed off, and the other stood erect or lopped over, as moved by the mood of the wearer. One eye was white and the other pink. He was a type of the homeless, unfed cur. Every element of dogly pride, courage, or resentment had been kicked or starved out of him. I deposited him in my dressing-room, and that night I gave him a royal feed. He was beyond comparison the ugliest dog I ever saw; but as he devoured his food, with his white eye furtively watching for the expected kick, he won me with his unique hideousness. I resolved then and there to adopt him—to link, as it were, our destinies.

I loved him for the wrongs he had endured,
And he loved me for the victuals I procured.

I first set about trying to learn his name. I saluted him by every name known to dogology, but none seemed to produce the desired caudal oscillation. So I christened him "George,"

principally, I think, because he was particularly obnoxious to George Waldron. Of course I knew that George was different from other dogs' names; but, then, George was different himself. George soon became as well known on the street as the other members of the company, and the hand that affixed the fragrant oyster can, or playfully hurled the idle brick, was stretched forth to gently stroke the erstwhile vagrant cur. George's development was rapid. He soon knew each member of the company, and declined to be patronized by anybody else. In one thing George at first caused me a pang. When I looked at his long, lank body and his big head, I anticipated the pleasure I should experience in seeing him expand under the influence of kind words and cold victuals. I knew that eating couldn't make his head any bigger, and I fondly hoped that it might so develop the body as to more nearly preserve the unities. But the more he ate the more he didn't seem to expand. This worried me. I feared that long fasting and much kicking had permanently disarranged his digestive organs. One day I took him to a barber who was well up in dogs, and asked him why George didn't get fat. The

barber looked at him thoughtfully for a few minutes, and then said he guessed George was the other kind of a dog. Of course this hadn't occurred to me, as George was my first dog. About this time George's mind began to give those evidences of development which gave him his subsequent fame. With his mental expansion came also a wonderful moral courage. He knew the oyster-can boy instinctively, and on two or three occasions made his presence unpleasantly felt. The boys recognized the change in their relative conditions, and sought to conciliate him; but while George was progressive in most things, in the matter of forgetting oyster cans he was a Bourbon, and so the small boy collectively gave him a wide berth. And so with the big cur dog, who had made life a burden. The manner in which George would sit in the door of the hotel and glare defiantly at his old and powerful enemies was wonderful. By the end of the first week he would venture unattended to the outer edge of the sidewalk, and bark fiercely at his former tormentors. In two weeks he would recklessly dash to the middle of the street with revenge in his voice and blood in his eye whenever he saw a big dog

passing. Should the dog incidentally turn to see what it was, the short space of time in which George would cover the ground between the middle of the street and the bar-room door was simply incredible. About this time occurred an incident that for a time threatened to destroy George's usefulness by making him ridiculous. Jimmie Griffiths, Ned Shapter and Jim Martin one afternoon coaxed George into the theatre and sheared him after the manner of the circus lion, excepting that they left the long hair only on his head and face and the tip of his tail. They then proceeded to fresco him. They painted his whiskers an ultramarine blue, his shaggy eyebrows received a coat of emerald green, his solitary ear a covering of lampblack, the tip of his tail was a flaming red, his protruding ribs were brought out like bas-reliefs with lines of chrome yellow. His feet and legs had the colors of the rainbow, and a line of dark brown the length of his backbone completed a make-up that gave him the appearance of a skeleton decked for the Jubilee. I had been out for an airing on my favorite broncho, and on my return to the hotel this apparition confronted me. I shall not attempt to describe my

feelings. Even now, with nearly two decades of years intervening, I feel my utter inability to treat the subject dispassionately. There are emotions in the lives of dogs and men, for the suitable expression of which the compilers of our language have made no adequate provision, and so I will pass in silence the brief interval immediately following this meeting. I am sure that my indignation was no greater than George's mortification. There was certainly an absence of the customary spontaneity in his greeting. True, his close-shaven tail, with its flaming tip, wagged a welcome, but it was not the free, joyous wag of yesterday. I fancied also that he ate three or four pounds less than usual for supper that evening. Still this may have been an illusion on my part, as three or four pounds one way or the other would scarcely have been noticeable in George's ordinary meal. It was, of course, impossible for me to learn for some days who perpetrated the outrage. No one knew anything about it. George soon became reconciled to his changed appearance, and in the increased popular favor which the incident secured to him, I buried my resentment. But George was rudely shorn of those elements of

dignity which he had been so rapidly acquiring. He had suddenly become a comedian, and had only to show his painted mug to "set the table in a roar."

Notable incidents in George's career now followed in rapid succession. We produced "Under the Gaslight," and on the opening night George was in the dressing-room sweetly dreaming on my dress-coat. The pier scene was on, and in the character of Trafford I made the desperate plunge from the pier into the Denver version of the East River to rescue the heroine. Some one—I could never learn who—had rudely wakened George and brought him upstairs just in time to see me make the leap. With a howl of recognition George flew out on the pier, paused just long enough for the audience to get a good look at him, and plunged in after me. As I raised the heroine from the angry waves, and supported myself against Snorkey's boat, I could see George's blue whiskers and pink eyes climbing over the top of a set water. Of course there was an encore, during which George succeeded in levelling the two rows of set waters, exposing the running-gear of the profile boat, and finally joining me on the old

mattress which constituted the turbulent waters of the East River. It is needless to add that George's debut created a sensation. The audience regarded it as a part of the play, and when on the following night he failed to make his appearance, there went up a protest so vigorous that Jack Langrishe gained my reluctant consent to an announcement of George's positive appearance each night the piece was played. As George's physical eccentricities and facial make-up were not particularly suited to the heroic rescue business, we put a yellow cap and red flannel jacket on him and sent him on in the police court scene as the Italian organ-grinder's monkey. That week we received full salaries. While George never personally protested, I have always believed that he felt hurt at being taken out of heroics and put into low comedy. True, certain natural and artificial conditions over which he had no control may have made him look the latter character best, but he had a mind superior to monkey business. George had now arrived at that stage of development when he would fearlessly make a bluff at the biggest dog in town. But with that rare forethought characteristic of himself,

he bluffed only at such times as members of the company were at hand to cover his retreat. This trait in George's character I greatly admired. In common with other of his prominent traits, it afforded me an insight into the far-seeing wisdom of Pythagoras. George soon reached the transformation period of his eventful career. In spite of my watchfulness he would appear almost daily in a new set of colors, or, rather, in a new distribution of the old ones. One day it would be red whiskers, blue ribs and a green tail; the next, green whiskers, red eyebrows and a blue tail. One morning at rehearsal he walked on to the stage entirely washed of his gaudy colors. At last, I thought, they are going to give him a rest; to allow one appearance in natural tints. Vain delusion! As George was making a dignified exit I heard a roar of laughter, and looking carefully for the cause, I discovered that the gay tints had been removed in order to bring out in bolder relief an artistic bit of partial gilding.

With the warm April days there came a change in George's habits. He would frequently absent himself from the dressing-room during the evening—an unusual proceeding.

During the last act he would crawl or sneak into the room, looking up sheepishly at me through his shaggy green eyebrows, and half crawl and half slide like a guilty thing into his corner. By a reflection from the mirror I could see that he was stealthily watching me, but when I turned suddenly, his eyes would be closed in profound slumber. One night I called Jimmie Griffith in to watch the pantomime. He carefully observed the proceeding, and explained with a laugh that George had evidently got a sweetheart. From this time on there was an absence of that entire cordiality in our relations that had formerly prevailed. We remained on speaking terms, to be sure, but I could see that, on his part at least, there was a divided affection. These strained relations continued for a week. The time was at hand when we were to take the coach for a ride over the Rockies to Central City. I had intended taking George with me. I had fondly hoped that a change of air and scene would recall him to some sense of his duty to society; but the siren's spell had bound him. On the last day of April we mounted the old Concord, bright and early. I looked vainly for my

protege, upon whom I had lavished so much, but the base ingrate did not even come to whine a parting or bark a God-speed, and so we parted. And as I rode sadly out the old Golden road, that bright April morning, I doubt not that selfish voluptuary, true to the Pythagorean instinct, was snugly couched in pleasure's lap.





STAGE ASPIRANTS.

(From an old Interview).

THE American character is kaleidoscopic. It is safe to assume that one-half of our population have at some period of their existence conceived the idea they were undiscovered geniuses or predestined dramatic managers. The idea that the drama is

a profession requiring a novitiate they do not for a moment entertain. They ignore the fact that Davenport, Booth, Barrett, Jefferson, in fact, about all successful actors, served many years' apprenticeship at utility, for starvation salary; or that Lester Wallack played walking gents at \$15 a week. These reflections were suggested during a talk held last week by a *Mirror* man and Milton Nobles, in which Mr. Nobles gave the following documentary evidence of the above statement. The letters appended are bona fide, and speak for themselves.

"Here is a bright one," said Nobles.

PHILADELPHIA, June 6, 1881.

MILTON NOBLES, ESQ., CARE NEW YORK MIRROR:

SIR:—The season of '81-82 promises to be one of unusual success and prosperity to managers having worthy attractions. It is essential and prudent for them to engage only reliable and experienced people; therefore the services of a first-class press and advance agent are indispensable. You will consult your interest if original methods in advertising are an object. I claim all the above, and guarantee success if your "ads." are placed in my hands. Please state salary and address

A. H.,

Advance and Press Agent, Lawrence St., Philadelphia.

"This letter," continued Nobles, "was from some fellow never heard of in the profession,

or out of it. Did I answer it? Of course. Here was my reply:

BROOKLYN, N. Y., June 8, 1881.

MR. A. H——.

MY DEAR SIR:—Your modest letter of advice is received and duly placed upon the “gall hook.” What you lack is confidence. You’re too modest. I want just such a man as you are, but I know they couldn’t get along without you in Philadelphia. Still, we can be of use to each other. My experience in my profession is limited—a trifle of fifteen years or so, and I need counsel such as yours. Some time when you have leisure, say about a couple of years from now, write me at length. Tell me about how you think I ought to run my company, and what you think the public want. Don’t be diffident. Let yourself out and send in your bill. But, above all, caution. Be secret, because if Goodwin or Mrs. Drew suspected that you contemplated leaving Philadelphia, they would get an injunction and prevent it, and then I should lose you. Gratefully thine,

MILTON NOBLES.

“I haven’t heard from him since,” continued the actor, “but I presume the next mail will bring an acceptance of my terms and a contract to sign.”

“Do you ever get applications from stage-struck females?” asked *The Mirror* man.

“Do I? Well, maybe I don’t! Here is one

from a Western town that came this very morning:

TOPEKA, Kan., June 5, 1881.

MR. NOBLES, CARE N. Y. MIRROR:

You will doubtless be surprised at receiving this letter from an entire stranger, but me and my sister want to go on the stage. I enclose our pictures. We have played often with amateurs, and have considerable experience. I have acted Pauline, also Camille and Juliet (Shakespeare). My sister, who is two (2) years younger than I, and said to be very beautiful, has only played once, but she has great natural talent for comedy characters like Lotta. Many of our friends and the critics here say she is superior to Lotta or Maggie Mitchell. My relatives are bitterly opposed to our going on the stage, as our family are well connected, and my intended, who is a critic, too, says that if I will wait until after our marriage (next year) he will write a piece for us, but I want to begin right away and learn, and as yours is the only company with which I would wish to travel, I will accept the leading business, and my sister the soubrettes. Please answer by return mail, stating what you will pay, and when you want us to join you. Excuse bad pen.

ANNIE FILKINS.

Stage name, Leo Leoni. Sister's stage name, Madgin May.

"Strange to say, this letter was written in a clean, graceful hand, and the enclosed photographs revealed two pretty faces, bearing unmistakable traces of intelligence. I wrote,

expressing regrets that they hadn't written a week earlier, as I had heard of them, and knew they were just what I wanted. In fact there was a public demand for them. I enclosed them letters of recommendation to Jim Collier, Bob Spiller, Jimmy Dickson, Tony Denier, Maggie Mitchell and Buffalo Bill. I shall watch the career of these young geniuses with interest."

"Here is the best specimen of cheek that I have seen lately:"

COHOES, N. Y., May 9, 1881.

Mr. Milton Nobles

dear Sir—My Friends advise me to go on the Stage i thought i would right you about it and for your Advise. i am 5 ft 9 in tal, black curley hare and large mustach. i would like to play lovers or comic parts. can likewise sing a fine irish song imitating pat Rooney. if your company is full can recommend some responsible manager who wants an actor of my style.

Anser by return male

R. EMMET GRATTAN,

P. O. Cohoes N. Y.

"I wrote Grattan, enclosing a book of the 'Iron Chest,' and told him to go at the character of Mortimer at once, as I expected to do the piece in Cohoes during the coming season, and I would bring him out. I expect he is at it."

"You have a keen sense of humor, I perceive," said the reporter.

"My dear boy, before you are in this business long, you will have just as keen a one as I have. But I want to show you the letter I received from Miss Smith. The shock struck me while I was in San Francisco last fall. Here it is:

CINCINNATI, Ohio, Nov. 8, 1880.

DEAR MR. NOBLES:

You will be surprised at receiving this letter from a lady who is an entire stranger to you. But though personally unknown to you, you are no stranger to me, for I have seen your acting, and night after night have sat enraptured beneath the spell of your genius. Have I not seen your graceful form surrounded by cruel, devouring flames, dragged from my sight by the brave little flower girl, while my whole being burned with a secret desire to be in her place. But this is girlish folly. Mr. Nobles, I believe that I was born for the stage. I write to you thus boldly, as I am sure that you are as good as you are handsome, and there are not many companies that I would care to travel with. I am not old, rather tall, brown hair, blue eyes, good figure, and by some considered handsome. Mr. Nobles, you are a single man—but why, this is girlish folly—I trust you will not betray my confidence, as my family oppose my being an actress, especially my younger brothers; one of them is a printer, and the other keeps a saloon on Vine street. I have acted with amateurs, and my friends on the papers, Mr. Charlie McLean, of

the *Commercial*, and Johnny McCormick, of the *Enquirer*, like me very much. They gave me good notices. I enclose my picture. It is not a good one, and my friends think it does not do me justice. I shall never allow that man to take me again. You can keep the picture.

Please, dear Mr. Nobles, do not keep me long in suspense. I feel that I must become an actress. It is my duty.

Affectionately yours,

JANE A. S—ITH.

P. S.—My stage name is Olivia Montrose. JANE.

“I played that night, but really haven’t felt just right since. However, I was able to write Olivia as follows, the next day :

SAN FRANCISCO, Cal., Nov. 16, 1880.

DEAREST OLIVIA:—Why did you not write before? I knew that it was coming. I felt it. I had seen you for months in my dreams. I thought at first it was cholera morbus. Some of my friends thought I had ’em again, but when your picture came all doubt was removed. Some men are born to these things, others acquire them, but mine is thrust upon me. When can you come ?

Thine ever,

MILTON.

“Here’s her answer to the above one :

CINCINNATI, Nov. 23. 1880.

DEAREST MILTON:—Your cherished missive is before me. You forgot to send a ticket. But as I see you are to play here in two weeks, you can send me your plays, and I can pick out the characters I like

best, and join you when you get here. I have a splendid memory, and could study the flower girl in two or three weeks easy enough. I think I would play that, as my friends would object to my acting the one that wears the boy's clothes. Send the play quick. What do you pay ?

As ever,

OLIVIA.

"I replied by express. I sent her a San Francisco directory for '72, a MSS. of 'The Wreck Ashore,' a bottle of gargling oil and one of Bob Ingersoll's lectures. I told her I wanted her bad; 'to hitch onto hope' and wait for me. In this world or the next, she must be mine. I rejoiced that it was a pure love of art, and not drink, that had driven her to the stage. I told her to meet me in front of the postoffice at 2 A. M. Sunday, February 30, 1887. This arrangement evidently was satisfactory. I haven't heard from her since."



A CHAT WITH THE BRAKEMAN.

WE took the west-bound train at Cedar Rapids on a bitter night in January. I seated myself in the smoking room for a little chat with the boys before seeking my berth. The brakeman, well dressed, intelligent fellow of about thirty, slipped in and took a seat on the edge of the wash basins after the train had pulled out. From my seat in the smoking room I could see his face. It was a remarkable bright face. Full of intelligence and with a merry twinkle in the eye, which often revealed itself as he caught the points of the chestnuts which the boys were, as usual, retailing between cigar puffs. Presently he took a camp stool and seated himself by the door of the smoking room. I liked his face, and, during a lull in the story-telling, asked him how he could stand brakeing in such weather without an overcoat. "O," he replied, "I'm dressed warm underneath, and these uni-

form coats are very heavy and warm, as they don't allow overcoats."

"It's pretty rough weather for railroading," I suggested.

"O, yes, but then some one has to do it. We wouldn't appreciate the good weather if we had it all the time."

"Have you been railroading long?"

"Yes, sir, all my life, and my father rail-roaded before me. I don't know why—it's hard work and small pay—but there's something about it that holds a man there once he gets there." Just then we pulled by a long freight train which was side-tracked. The night was bitter cold, and the brakemen on the freight train were hurrying from car to car, swinging lanterns, setting brakes, and climbing up and down the sides of the ice-covered cars. "Look at those fellows out there. They get forty dollars a month, barely enough to keep them from starvation, for many of them have families. They scarcely know what it is to have a good night's rest in a comfortable bed, or the luxury of a square, wholesome meal. Yet there they are year after year, facing the hail, sleet and blizzards until they break down, get marked

up, or lose a leg or an arm, and then they disappear, the Lord only knows where, and their children follow in their wake. But you couldn't drive 'em into anything else, that's the funny part of it. I suppose every freight brakeman thinks that sooner or later he will be a conductor, and eventually get a passenger train. We all know that there are railroad presidents and superintendents who began as brakemen, and the biggest lunk head in the world is entirely satisfied with himself, and hangs on waiting for his chance to make himself solid with the superintendent. But railroading ain't what it used to be."

I ventured that I fancied there had been a wonderful advance toward perfection in railroading during the past twenty years.

"O, yes, of course," replied the brakeman, "in the way of speed, comfort, elegance and all that, but what I mean is that the position of conductor on a passenger amounts to nothing now. In the old days once a man got a passenger train on a good Eastern road he could make himself solid for life in a year or two. Of course, the stockholders didn't do so well, but the conductor, if he was clever, always

turned in enough to make a good showing, and the superintendent would stand it rather than risk a change. Sometimes one of the old conductors would get so avaricious that he couldn't bear to divide, and off his head would go, but he was pretty sure to have a snug home in the city and a fine country seat and a few thousand in bank, before he tried the grand wolf act. You'd be astonished if you knew the number of old New York Central conductors who are now retired capitalists, raising large families and attending church and prayer-meeting regularly twice a week, and all saved on seventy-five dollars a month. But the new fangled notions that came in with the Vanderbilts and Goulds knocked blazes out of the old style of getting rich quick. The slip system was a good thing for the stockholders, but it was rough on the conductors. You see the great incentive that drew a splendid body of men into the service was removed. That's why you find so many insignificant chumps running passenger trains. Anybody is good enough for a conductor now."

"SARY."

I KNEW her name was Sarah by reason of the proprietor calling out "Sary!" when I entered and seated myself at the table. It was just after daylight, on a bright October morning. We had come down on the early train from Eureka, Nevada, to Palisades, to take the overland train on the U. P. for San Francisco. Across the road from the little station house was a rough board shanty where the Eureka passengers could breakfast before the arrival of the overland. I was first to enter, and, seating myself near the open door, looked about for the inevitable Chinaman, and was somewhat surprised when the burly proprietor called out "Sary." If the calling of her name was a surprise to me, the appearance of "Sary" herself was in the nature of a revelation. After an intervening period of seven busy years I approach Sarah with trepidation, a lack of confidence, as it were, in my ability to do full justice to the subject. Sarah

entered through a rough board door in the rear of the room, and I had an opportunity to measure her graceful outlines as she approached. She was about five feet eight inches in height, and pretty much one size the entire length. This much I saw at a glance. As she busied herself at an adjoining table, collecting a plate, knife and fork, glass of water and a paper napkin, I had time to take a furtive inventory of her various effects. Her hair was a dead, dusty red, parted in the middle and combed straight back with great care and scrupulous neatness, and tied in a miniature Psyche knot. Her face was a mass of freckles. Her nose was very short, and a pronounced pug. Her cheek bones high, large chin, and small, almost colorless eyes. Her lips were very thin, giving a severe business-like expression to her face, and Sarah was "business" from the word go. Her hands were large and bony. She wore a calico frock, gathered at the waist, but owing to Sarah's peculiar physical proportions, the gathering wasn't much to speak of. A novice could readily discover that Sarah scorned those matters of artificial adornment common to her sex. Aside from the

calico frock, Sarah's wearing apparel was of the most primitive and economical character. Corset and bustle represented unknown quantities in her make-up. At the first glance I thought her a man in petticoats, or rather in a calico slip. But I was wrong. She banged the plate down in front of me, chucked the knife, fork and spoon after it, dropped the tumbler of water on my starboard side (such of it as escaped my lap and the oil-cloth table cover), and then she spoke. Whatever years may do in the matter of effacing the minor details of scene, natural and architectural surroundings, time can never obliterate from my memory the impression made by Sarah's voice, and the expressive eloquence of her first vocal effort. It struck me as though shot from a Derringer. This is what she said:

"Beef steak er hammen neggs er liver'n bacon?"

I paused a moment to collect my scattered thoughts and said, mildly, "hammen neggs."

"Straight up er turned over?"

"I beg your pardon?" I said, apologetically.

"Straight up er turned over!" repeated Sarah with added severity.

"Which? Where? What is it?" I asked diffidently.

"Eggs! eggs! Wantcher eggs straight up er turned over?"

"I—oh, yes, I see, boiled please, straight up."

With a look of withering contempt Sarah strode to the rear door, and I heard my order delivered as follows: "One hammen neggs 'n coffee. By this time several others had taken seats at the various tables. Poor Lonny Schwartz, who was very fat and very sleepy, selected a seat at a table directly opposite to mine. Sarah returned and commenced shooting off her little speech at each. The expressions on the different faces as Sarah's "beefsteak er hammen neggs er liver 'n bacon" struck them was an amusing study. But the second shot, the "straight up er turned over," was the one that seemed to rivet the attention of all. Each repetition would be followed by a momentary pause. Then the victim would look up amiably, but meeting the awful severity of Sarah's countenance, the smile would fade away and an order would be given in a lamb-like tone. There was a provincial bridal

couple at the opposite side of my own table, and I shall never forget their embarrassment when Sarah sprung her second question on them. Schwartz had dropped his chin upon his breast and was sweetly sleeping when Sarah opened with her "beefsteak er hammen negs er liver 'n bacon." But Lonny was too far gone, and Sarah jabbed him in the neck with the butt-end of a fork and shot it off again. Lonny looked up indignantly, but one glance at Sarah's face banished his indignation, and he ordered "liver and bacon and eggs."

"Straight up er turned over?"

"Eh, what's that?"

"Straight up er turned over?"

"Who? When? What for? What do you mean?" asked Schwartz, now fully awake.

"Howje want yer eggs, straight up er turned over?"

"Oh! Straight up."

An oppressive stillness now prevailed. The waiting guests exchanged glances with faint smiles. The humor of the situation had forced itself upon all, but none seemed to have the courage to laugh outright and so relieve

the feeling of painful restraint. The silence became more oppressive with each succeeding moment, and was only relieved by the arrival of Sarah with my order, which she dumped in silence and strode to the kitchen for the next. Swartz's order had been given last, and long before it arrived he was again sleeping soundly. Finally it arrived and was safely landed. The rattling of the dishes woke the comedian. "Here's your breakfast, wake up," said Sarah savagely.

Lonny cast a hurried glance at the dishes and missed his principal order.

"Hold on," said the comedian, "you forgot my liver and bacon."

"Sarah gave him a savage look and started for the kitchen. The stillness was now partially relieved by the rattling of the knives and forks. Presently Sarah returned with a solitary plate in her hand and dashed it down in front of the fat comedian, exclaiming:

"There's your bacon and the cook says he'll have yer liver'n a minute."

Lonny's eyes opened wildly and the long-suppressed volume of laughter burst forth in mighty roars.

THE MISSION OF THE THEATRE.

WHAT volumes of high sounding nonsense have been written and spoken upon "The Mission of the Theatre," "The elevation of the Stage," "The Purification of the Drama, etc." For a half dozen centuries, more or less, the subject of the true function of the Drama has been revived with a regularity so chronic that it may be said never to have ceased. A few years since some eminent canons of the Established Church and some equally eminent actors, among them Henry Irving, met in friendly discussion in Manchester, during which the former expressed a willingness to patronize and encourage a "purified drama" as a "high moral teacher." And in my humble judgment, right here is the gulf into which the self-constituted "reformers" of the drama plunge. The idea that any sane person goes, or ever will go, to the theatre to listen to a moral lecture or theological essay is simple rot. The drama belongs essentially to the domain of art, not ethics. People don't go

to church to laugh (I am not shaken in this conviction by the fact that one eminent Brooklyn divine does not share it); neither do they go to the art galleries or the theatre to pray. The actor and his art have their sphere—a sphere that has nothing in common and nothing necessarily in conflict with the theologian or the inculcator of moral philosophy. The church is an inherent part of our civilization, the drama and kindred arts are the necessary products of our culture. The representation of the beauty, the pathos, the sublimity in nature and in human character is the legitimate aim of art, and when this is successfully consummated there must of necessity be a moral of greater or less significance—but when the artist deliberately constructs his work with a view of pointing a moral, he violates the canons of art. “If,” says Emerson, “the eye was made for seeing, then beauty is its own excuse for being.”

And in like strain Tennyson sings:

“O, to **what** uses shall we put
The **wildwood** flower that simply blows,
Or is there **any** moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?”

I think it an assertion susceptible of proof, that no truly great work of art, whether in

painting, sculpture or literature, has for its purpose and main characteristic a definite moral lesson capable of being expressed in didactic form. All such works appeal directly to the sense of the beautiful or sublime. A great tragedy moves us to wonder, pity or terror; it excites strong emotion and produces a peculiar exaltation of spirit, which may indeed exert a powerful moral effect; though that was not the immediate end proposed by the dramatist. People go to theatres for amusement, diversion, excitement. They want to be lifted for the moment out of the dullness and pettiness of routine, out of the atmosphere of daily life, into a region of poetry, romance and adventure. They want to escape for a time from dull commonplace realities, and to be refreshed by glimpses of an ideal world, fairer and brighter than that in which their daily lot is cast. If it is the legitimate object of art to strengthen or to teach, that object must be attained indirectly. Its first and nearest object is to charm and to delight. That dramatist or "reformer" will live unrecognized and die unsung who writes and argues from the mistaken thesis that a play should be a sermon in disguise.

"AND THE VILLAIN STILL PURSUED HER."

PROBABLY no current catch phrase has been more widely quoted during the past fifteen years than the above quotation. It is safe to say that it is in daily use at the present time wherever the English language is spoken and, like many popular quotations, it is used by hundreds of people who are in ignorance of its source. In 1875, in Philadelphia, my play of *THE PHOENIX* was originally produced. It was a dramatization by myself of a serial in one of the flash story papers. It had previously been dramatized by the author, and played throughout the country under different titles until it was supposed to have exhausted its usefulness for dramatic purposes. At this time, January, 1875, I held the position of "leading man" at Col. Wood's Museum, then one of the leading theatres of Philadelphia. Owing to a week's bad business the "Col." notified the company that salaries were to be reduced. I resigned my position

rather than accept the reduction, and arranged amicably for a "farewell benefit." At this benefit THE PHOENIX, originally christened "Jim Bludso," had its first representation. The caste included as principals, beside the writer, Annie Ward Tiffany, Emma Maddern, Agnes Proctor, Robert Wilson, George Charles, William Davidge and J. H. Anderson. The story-writing incident—the one original thing in the play (if we except the young stage Hebrew of to-day, who owes his dramatic existence to this old play), was entirely an afterthought. The absurd language and grotesque situations evolved by the writers of dime novels had always seemed excruciatingly funny to me, and I had often thought them a fine subject for stage satire of a broad kind, but not until twenty-four hours preceding the production of the play had I thought seriously of utilizing it. Indeed, the Bohemian had not even figured in the construction of the play, my character in the first act being instead, that of a seedy, dissipated lawyer, a character entirely serious. Uncle Ben Baker was our stage manager and, during the second rehearsal of the piece, I called him aside and read him the stuff I had got together,

to see what he thought of it. As I proceeded Uncle Ben's genial smile broadened into a grin, which ended in a genuine laugh. That settled it. That afternoon I re-wrote my character in the prologue, making him a tipsy, seedy Bohemian story writer, for the purpose of ringing in the little experiment, for so I still regarded it. The rest is stage history. The old play, in its new dress, was a pronounced success, owing, everybody declared, to the story writing incident. The Grand Central Theatre (Philadelphia) gave me a handsome sum for a two weeks' run, and put the play on in fine shape. Before a week was over the street-gamins had taken up the refrain "and the villain still pursued her." The reporters, who seldom visited the Central to see a drama, were soon out in force, and the local columns of the press caught up the phrase. It drew thousands of people to the theatre who had never before entered a "novelty" theatre. I received offers for engagements, which followed rapidly in New York, Brooklyn, Baltimore, Washington, etc. Simmonds & Slocum's Minstrels, a permanent enterprise, were at the time located at their Arch

Street Opera House. George Thatcher was a member of the company. George was young, intelligent, ambitious, and always on the lookout for local topics to utilize in his quaint songs and sayings. He promptly seized on "the villain still pursued her," and worked it into a song, which he has made famous. Two or three years later he went overland with Haverly's Minstrels, and when I took the trip with my own company the year following, Colorado and California papers asked why I gave Thatcher's gag line so much prominence in my printing. Numerous other minstrel men followed with noisy, witless imitations of Thatcher's quaint song. I remember one of them, named DeVere, met me in a Brooklyn street car while I was playing an engagement in that city, and asked me if I was singing his song in my piece, as he saw it mentioned in the synopsis. Only four or five years ago I went to Montreal for the first time. A local critic, a very wise and patronizing young man, asked my agent, Mr. Murray, why I quoted the line so extensively in my printing. He laughed inordinately when modestly informed that I was generally supposed to be the

author of the phrase. “What nonsense,” he exclaimed, “why I have been using it in my locals for ten years.” “Yes,” replied Murray, “that’s about the age of it.” The reporter laughed heartily, and said he had met and read about cheeky agents, but this was the climax. “By the way,” asked Murray, “if Nobles didn’t write it, who did?” A painful stillness ensued during which the reporter discovered that he didn’t just remember. “However,” he said, “’tis as good as sure that it’s somewhere in Dickens’. I’ll look it up before your star gets here and be ready for him.” “Do,” said the agent, “and spring it on him the morning after he opens. Nobles will enjoy the joke as heartily as any one.”

As it was not “sprung” on me during my Montreal engagement, I presume the reporter didn’t find time to run through his Dickens.



STAGE ANECDOTES.

A WELL known actor named L—— was some years since a member of the stock company at Mrs. Drew's Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia. On a certain occasion he was very imperfect and substituted much of his own language, of rather a poor quality, for that of the author. He got through, however, and went into the green-room to shake hands with himself. Mrs. Drew, who had been in her box during his worst scene, quietly followed him into the room unperceived. L—— swelled up in front of the mirror, stroked his black moustache, and delivered himself something after this fashion: "L—— you handsome cuss, you always get there, don't you? Can't stick you. You didn't speak much of the author, but you gave them plenty of L——, and they didn't know the difference." "Do you think so?" came in the tragic tones of Mrs. Drew from the open door.

L—— turned around aghast. "I desire to congratulate you, Mr. L——." "Oh, indeed, thank you," replied L——, now quite at ease.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Drew, "I desire to congratulate you upon the fact that Lindley Murray was not in front," and she swept out of the room.

"Lindley Murray," repeated L—— turning to Mrs. Jamieson, "who the dickens is Lindley Murray, one of the stockholders?"

"PICKLES."

THE late Barney Macauley was a man of strong individuality and pronounced traits. Barney's profanity was a specialty. About 1874, among the army of supers at Wood's Theatre was a long, lank six-foot gawk, known to the stage hands as Pickles. Pickles graduated from supe to assistant "props." Pickles was as slim as a rail. His hair was red and his face freckled. His eyes were small and his nose was large. He wore a 6½ hat and a No. 10 boot, and his hands looked like a pair of hams.

But Pickles soon developed a specialty. He had a genius for falling over furniture during quiet scenes. The stage at Wood's was small, and Pickles' feet were out of proportion to his surroundings. Pickles particularly distinguished himself on the first night that he assisted "props." Clara Morris was playing Camille, the dishes, wine glasses and remnants of the supper scene had been carefully piled on a large tray, and placed in the property room. During the closing scene of the play, and at the moment when the dying Camille, with a convulsive sob sinks upon Armand's breast, the death-like stillness of the scene was broken by an unearthly crash. Pickles had gathered up the tray of dishes to return them to the restaurant, and as Camille through her flowing tears cried, "O Armand! Armand! you have come?" Pickles fell over one of his feet and was buried under the wreck of broken china. Macauley, who was in a box crying like a big school-boy, rushed back to Mehen. "What in h—l was that?" thundered Macauley. "What?" asked Mehen, who was crying over the prompt book. "That d—d crash, that earthquake," yelled Macauley. "Oh, I guess it was Pickles," said

Mehen. "Pickles?" roared Macauley, "who in h—l is Pickles?" "Why, he's Props' new assistant." "Where is he? where is he?" shouted Barney, rushing for the property room, but Pickles had heard the signals of danger, and made his escape to the fly-gallery.

A few weeks later, a new emotional drama was being played. Macauley was in the cast, doing the wronged husband business. At the end of one of the acts, there was a child's death scene. The little flaxen-haired candidate for angelic honors had just begun to see and hear things after the manner of all well-regulated stage deaths. Barney as the wronged husband and suffering father, was kneeling by the bedside. "See! papa, see!" said the dying innocent, "O, what beautiful children with long, golden hair, and wings like the rainbows, and now they sing so sweetly—listen papa, listen! and tell me what you hear." At that moment, Pickles, who had been struggling to get an old bureau down stairs into the store-room, got his feet tangled and fell down stairs backwards and the bureau after him. Barney raised himself to his full six feet two beside his dying child and answered, "Pickles, by the Gods!"

MR. J. DUKE MURRAY, the popular business manager, who, as is well known, is the lineal descendant of a line of Scottish kings, was an actor before joining the great army of "press workers," "star makers," and "fame builders."

When I say that he was an actor, I should probably qualify the statement, as there seems to be conflicting opinions upon the subject—however, Duke used to play parts, principally low comedy. About twenty years ago Duke was working "props" and doing "utility" with a western traveling company. The management put up the *SEA OF ICE*, and found themselves short of a Captain DeLascour.

Duke was six feet three, and as thin as a rail, but the manager concluded that with judicious padding Duke would make an imposing figure as the heroic captain of the *Urania*. It was the most important character "props" had ever been cast for, but his ambition was equal to the emergency. The company had three or four days in which to study and rehearse the piece. The captain has one speech that always, in the language of the rural critic, "brings down the house." When he learns that his crew has mutinied, and that not only his noble ship

but the lives of his wife and child are at the mercy of the young Spanish adventurer, in wild desperation he cries, "Monster, take my life, but spare, O, spare my wife and child!"

Duke, whose efforts had up to this time been confined to making announcements and doing the big policeman who comes on when the row is over and drags off a small boy, felt that his opportunity had come at last, and visions of "leading juveniles" at McVicker's floated dimly before him. The leader of the orchestra was Duke's room-mate, and like all leaders he knew all about acting, or thought he did, and began coaching Duke for the great event.

They were playing in Iowa City that week at the old Ham's Hall. Duke and the leader had a room on the top floor of the St. James Hotel, and when they got in at night and commenced rehearsing the great scene, the landlord thought the house had been struck by a blizzard. All of the guests on the second floor came down to the office in their night shirts, and one nervous man made a rope of the bed clothing and let himself down to the street. The landlord got a step-ladder and looked over the transom. Hogan, the leader, was seated on the window-

sill, book in hand. Two candles and five empty beer bottles were ranged across a corner of the room to represent foot-lights, and the embryo tragedian (clad in a solitary garment, abbreviated as to length), was striding wildly about the little garret after the manner of a caged lion.

The eventful night arrived. Hogan had impressed his pupil with the importance of not acting at the regular rehearsals. "Walk through at rehearsal" he would say, "hold yourself for the night, and then paralyze 'em."

Duke felt his fame assured. At the last rehearsal he called the manager aside and asked: "If I make a success of this part will you raise my salary?"

"I will try to raise a part of it for ye, me boy," answered the manager.

The curtain rose on the play fraught with fate. Hogan was on an elevated seat ready to start the applause whenever his pupil scored a point. Duke held himself for his great speech. The cue came. The leader laid down his fiddle and got ready to start the applause. Duke gave him a look which said plainly, "Keep your eye on me, here's where I hog 'em."

"Monster," he roared, "Monster! spare my life, but take, O, take my wife and child!"

Hogan fell off his seat and upset the bass fiddler, the audience yelled, and the tragic scene became a howling farce.

MR. JOHN ROGERS, the "hustling" manager of Minnie Palmer, was about twenty years ago call boy at Wood's Theatre, Cincinnati, under the management of the late Barney Macauley. John tried to be an actor once, and only once. A drama was put on which required the full strength of the company, and at rehearsal it was found that a small servant's character was still unprovided for. Harry Mehen, who was stage manager, summoned Rogers and told him to rehearse it. He had but one entrance and one line to speak, which was, "My lord, a messenger from your honored father desires to see you." Rogers was dumped into a-livery about four sizes too large for him. The collar of the coat completely hid his ears, and his hands were lost in the sleeve somewhere between the cuff and elbow. The vest just reached to his knees. John paced up and down behind the scenes for an hour, going through his solitary line. Just

before the time for him to go on, Macauley came back upon the stage and caught a sight of him. "What's that?" said Barney. "What's what?" asked Mehen. "This," said Barney, taking hold of Rogers' coat collar and pulling it completely over his head. Just then "My lord" gave Rogers his cue. "That's you," shouted Mehen, "go on," and Rogers with the line frightened out of him was pushed on the stage. Working his head up through his coat-collar, John with his knees knocking together, tried to speak his line, but his tongue seemed glued to his mouth. Finally, after three or four desperate efforts, he stammered, "My lord—my lord—my lord, I—I—I knew d——d well I'd stick," all in one tone. Macauley, who had been standing in the entrance observing the exhibition, picked up a ten-foot scene brace and reached for Rogers, fixed the hook in the end of the brace firmly in his coat collar and yanked him off the stage, his head entirely disappearing under his coat. That ended Rogers' career as an actor.

JOHN E. OWENS used to tell the following good one, at his own expense. Many years ago he was touring the West. The night fol-

lowing a performance of Solon Shingle and the Live Indian in an Indiana town, the company took the train for Indianapolis. A hayseed, who had evidently witnessed the performance the night before, spotted Owens, and, after sundry remarks about the weather, asked whether he belonged to the "show." Owens answered that the "show" belonged to him, which amounted to the same thing. Hayseed remarked: "I thought I knowed you, that's why I spoke. You acted the clown fust rate. I've got a boy to hum that 'ud make a fust rate clown, and I just thought I kinder inquire if you couldn't give him a job. He's just full of comic capers, and last night when me and the old woman was a lookin' at you cuttin' up monkey-shines, Martha said to me: 'Reuben, that's wot our boy ought to be a doin.' An that's why I mention it. I'm sure Rube would make a fortin' among you clowns, for he's a reglar sort of a natoral born dam fool anyway."

McKEAN BUCHANNAN was quite famous as a tragedian of the barn storming order some twenty years ago. "Mac," as he was familiarly called, was a very successful poker player. It was his

custom after paying salaries to his company to organize a friendly game of "draw" after the play. It's needless to say that the salaries always found their way back to their original source. It is said that this peculiar managerial tactics enabled the tragedian to keep on the road in the face of very bad business. C. W. Couldock once met the tragedian at a small town in Ohio, and engaged in a friendly set to "after the show." Mac won Couldock's last dollar, then lent him twenty to continue his journey and took his note. As they were parting at the depot, Buchannan said: "Charley, I want to play in New York. I want to show 'em there what acting really is. Can't you give me a letter of introduction to some of the managers?" "Why certainly," replied Couldock, and taking from his pocket the blank leaf of a letter, he penciled the following:

WM. WHEATLEIGH, ESQ., MANAGER, NEW YORK CITY:

DEAR SIR:—This will introduce the eminent Western tragedian, Mr. McKean Buchannan. He wants to play in New York. I have seen him play *Macbeth*, *Richelieu* and *poker*. He plays the latter best.

C. W. COULDOCK

MR. JOHN MAGUIRE, the Montana manager, was some years ago manager of the theatre in Portland, Oregon. Maguire had succeeded in making an engagement with Lawrence Barrett to visit Portland. The week preceding Barrett's engagement, Maguire had his annual benefit. His individual part of the performance was a recitation of "The Charge of the Light Brigade." At the end of his "wild charge" John was called in front of the curtain, of course, to receive his gold-headed cane, etc. After thanking the mayor and fellow-citizens for this "unexpected testimonial," etc., John proceeded to announce the Barrett engagement, and concluded by saying that "owing to the great expense attending this engagement it would be necessary to charge two dollars for reserved seats." Maguire started to bow himself off, when a rich brogue from the gallery shouted, "O, the *would* charge tha' made!"

LOCAL rivalry is supposed to have reached a climax when the Minneapolis man got up and left the church because the preacher took his text from St. Paul. A rivalry about as intense

has for years existed between Syracuse and Rochester, N. Y. George Miln, the tragedian, was recently playing "Damon and Pythias" in Rochester. In his first soliloquy, Damon says, "There is no public virtue left in Syracuse," the sentence had barely escaped his lips when a small boy in the gallery asked, "Wot's de matter wid Rochester?" "O, she's all right," echoed the entire gallery, and then the play proceeded.



WRECKED GENIUSES.

ALGERNON ARTHUR returns to his native town fresh from college, with his mind resolved and his hair banged. He has written three poems and several essays for the college monthly, and the professor of Greek has assured him that he is destined to shine in literature or journalism. He drops into the office of the *Tri-weekly Palladium* and reads his poems to the editor. His father is mayor of the town and holds a mortgage on the *Palladium* press, so of course the editor treats him civilly. During the summer he grinds out three or four yards of doggerel, writes some society personals, evolves two or three alleged humorous paragraphs and touches up the tariff. He is now a journalist. A Rochester daily desiring at short notice to replace a dead liver-pad "ad.," has inadvertently copied one of his poems. The editor of a small magazine stumbled across it, and having probably

been out late the night before, fancied he detected a thought in it and run it in on the last page to fill an odd space adjoining a soap "ad." From here it naturally gravitated to the *Palladium* columns, where it was reproduced with a glowing eulogy of the world-famous author.

Algernon now moved on the metropolis, his head stuffed with thoughtless flattery, and his valise stuffed with thoughtless manuscript. He was a little surprised at first to find that his fame had not preceded him to that extent which he had supposed. His card did not create the flutter in the magazine offices which he had a right to anticipate. Indeed, some editors sent out a boy to ask who he was and what he wanted. After two or three months spent in the vain endeavor to secure a hearing in the magazines, he commenced to work the dailies with little better success. Algernon now frequently sought consolation in that refuge of weak minds, the winecup. Occasionally he worked a few verses one of the Sunday weeklies—then he began in doing space work on street fights, small burglaries, wife beaters, etc. He also neglected his linen and shaved only semi-occasionally.

The end of a year found him seedy, tipsy,

dead broke, and a chronic beat, and his honest, hard-working associates were always ready to give him a lift. "Poor fellow, what a pity!" "Wonderfully bright, if he could let liquor alone." "Has written verses worthy of Swinburne." "Has the wild gifts of Poe, but can't keep sober." These are the kind of remarks frequently heard. In fact, Algernon is now a fully equipped Wrecked Genius.

In a year or two he will die in the hospital or inebriate asylum, and if his body escapes the dissecting knife, his good-natured companions will "chip in" all around, and stow him snugly away in Cypress Hill, and hold him down with a broken column.

At the tender age of six years, Raphael Dusenbury gave evidence of the possession of those gifts which were to make his name famous in the world of art. Attention was first attracted to those gifts by a few humorous drawings on the fly-leaf of his mother's prayer-book, executed between the "firstly" and "lastly" of one of the Rev. Podgram's sermons. At ten, Raphael had so far developed as to make copies

of the most striking figures on the circus posters. His mother bought him an outfit of colors and he filled in the figures. Nothing could have been more striking than the pink eyes, green legs and blue hair with which he adorned the young lady who was jumping through the hoop of fire. This bit of art gave Master Raphael great celebrity, and probably had much to do with the shaping of his career. He took all the prizes for drawing at the public school, and during his first term at college, two of his landscapes were exhibited and raffled off at the annual church fair in his native town. One of them was won by the clerk in the post-office, and as he slept in the office and had no place to hang it, he lent it to the postmaster (who was also president of the National Bank), and he hung it in his parlor. The Young Ladies' Aid Society bought the other from the colored man who won it, and voted it to the editor of the *Weekly Vindicator*.

The prominence thus given to his earliest ambitious efforts no doubt greatly enhanced his already growing reputation. He received several orders for pictures, among them one from the editor of the *Clarion*, and another from the

vice-president of the bank. With this powerful recognition of his genius, Raphael now felt his fame assured, and at the end of his first term quit college and devoted himself entirely to art. Raphael's great specialty was rapidity, and during the three months following his withdrawal from college he had painted several yards of pictures; but the demand for green cows, blue trees, chrome yellow water and pink grass was rather dull, so he cut the pictures off into different sizes and moved on the metropolis, where he felt sure of appreciation.

He was somewhat astonished upon his arrival to find the market flooded, and he was hurt when the art stores didn't seem anxious to frame any of his pictures, and give them conspicuous places. He hired a small room and stored his treasures under the bed, meantime continuing to spoil more nice, clean canvas. He made his headquarters at a neighboring beer saloon, and as the good-natured Teuton had allowed him to run a bill, he finally got even by having Raphael fresco the walls. His red windmills, green sky, blue peasant girl and babbling brook of old-gold water made a sensation, and secured

him several orders for similar specimens of decorative art.

But the enemy of genius had marked him for her own. Tortured by lack of appreciation and stung by the prosperity of inferior rivals, his brilliant mind was almost constantly obscured by mortification and beer. He allowed his hair and beard to grow, and with a portion of the proceeds of the beer saloon frescoes he bought a velvet coat and a big hat. He also got a shirt with a large rolling collar, and began gradually to work himself into that state of mental imbecility necessary to the successful representation of a Wrecked Genius. His inevitable approach to this state could be readily detected by his absent-mindedness in forgetting to change his shirt, and his evident repugnance to soap and water on all occasions. The end of the second year finds him back in his native town—his velvet coat is faded and brown, his beard is long, his hair is matted and his proboscis blossoms like the rose. His poor old mother, who is now a widow, manages to keep the wolf from the door by taking boarders in the heavily mortgaged homestead. If Raphael is occasionally caught sober, he does an odd bit

of sign-painting or frescoes the hotel omnibus, but his principal energies are devoted to holding down a chair in the beer saloon, and posing as a Wrecked Genius.

MR. WILLIAM MCSWEENEY (Stage name T. Garrick Burke), during the "palmy days" of the drama held, with credit, a minor position in stock companies, playing in Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Louisville and Cleveland. Mr. Burke was a young man of fair intelligence, limited education and talent enough, properly applied, to have kept him steadily employed at a good living salary, with certainty of advancement to the limit of his ability. Mr. Burke had a little vein of humor which occasionally cropped out in light comedy characters. But Burke had one great talent, which was also his greatest misfortune. He was a capital story-teller off the stage. He was what in the profession is known as a "bar-room comedian," a style of comedian who is immensely entertaining off the stage, but seldom funny on it. But his story-telling and funny recitations gave him great popularity with the "gang."

A new drama was produced in which a char-

acter fell to Burke that seemed to have been written to fit his peculiarities of figure, gesture, manner, speech and gait. It was a dramatic affinity and he made a great success. It was the turning point in his career—it was such an occasion as has often happened and will continue to happen to stock actors. If the actor has some real ability and a level head, it of course will make his reputation and in many cases his fortune. If, on the other hand, as often happens, he has little or no real ability, and a head susceptible of spontaneous enlargement, the chances are that it will eventuate in making him a Wrecked Genius.

Burke captured the town and was the theatrical hero of the hour. No thought was given to the experienced dramatist who had written the bright lines, conceived the striking situations and formulated the intricate stage business—it was all Burke in more senses than one, for as a matter of fact he had simply played himself. But the general public, who knew nothing of the man personally, accepted it as a creation, and the little inner circle had “always said Burke would get there if he got half a chance.”

The piece ran for two weeks, at the end of which Burke had actually supplanted the "first comedian" in fickle popular favor. During the second week he asked for a raise of salary which was refused. Then he gave two weeks' notice. During his last week, in different characters, his work ranged as usual from mediocre to bad. But it was Burke and it must be funny, so everybody laughed. Burke published his press notices in the theatrical journals, which consumed his season's savings. He also announced that he was open for starring engagements. There was no great struggle among managers or capitalists as to who should secure his services, but he had letters from several authors who had plays to sell.

Burke had now been on a spree for about ten days, and his particular friends and admirers had been helping him along. He finally brought up in the station-house, where he sobered up and found that he was penniless. He tried to borrow a few dollars from the "gang," who had been laughing at his stories and swelling his head with flattery and bad advice, but they were all terribly hard pushed for ready money

just at that time. One or two doled out a pittance as though giving alms to a beggar. Then one of them suggested that he take a benefit.

The friend waited upon the manager and the latter reluctantly gave up a night for bare expenses, rather than antagonize Burke's 'friends.' Then the papers began to work up the benefit. Of course Burke's great success and sudden popularity was so recent that the theatre would not hold the people and the great local favorite would start for New York in flying colors to organize his starring tour. Just six weeks from the night of his great professional triumph his benefit occurred. Alas! how ephemeral is fame. The house was one-third filled. Such of the "gang" as had received free tickets for working up the benefit, formed a noisy and conspicuous group in a proscenium box—the rest were conspicuous by reason of their absence. The benefit left Burke in debt to the manager just seventy-eight dollars. Then his fellow-players, who were not geniuses, but plain everyday actors, who attended to their business, supported their families and avoided bar-rooms and the "gang," chipped in five dollars a piece and shipped him off to New York in respect-

able shape. He had letters of introduction to "critics" and "journalists" galore. In a week or two his great talent as a "bar-room comedian" had made him very popular with the "gang. Then he got a chance to do a recitation and tell a few funny gags at a big charity benefit. The paragraphers picked him up and kept his name constantly going the rounds after this fashion:

"The inimitable comedian, Garrick Burke, will shortly start on his starring tour. This famous comedian has had several offers to appear at a local theatre."

"The original humorist and comedian, Burke, will shortly star in a farce-comedy from the pen of a well-known New York journalist."

Finally an "angel" was found in the person of a very young man whose mother had recently died and left him three or four thousand dollars. The poor boy was talked into paying some miserable scribbler a thousand dollars for a lot of rot concocted from old farces, and which any stage manager would have thrown together in two days for twenty-five dollars. The "star" received an advance of five hundred. Mr. Ike Rosenbud, "ye hustling agent and press worker"

was engaged at a salary of seventy-five dollars a week, receiving two weeks in advance. (Mr. Rosenbud had formerly been a circus programmer at twelve dollars a week). Then came printers and lithographers—there were ten highly colored lithographs of Burke in as many different attitudes. In one he held a high hat in his left hand with an overcoat thrown carelessly over his arm, while his right held a cane. In another he wore the cap and bells of Touchstone, his hand resting on an open volume of Shakespeare. (Mr. Burke's acquaintance with Shakespeare was limited to a few performances of the second grave digger, which he doubled with Bernardo, and like characters in the old acting editions. Aside from these he had probably never read a line of Shakespeare in his life). A third represented him in full evening dress, posed in heroic attitudes on the stage, with a monstrous theatre crowded in every tier, and in the boxes faces of well-known statesmen, soldiers, poets, politicians and club men. There was also a full sheet lithograph in five colors of Mr. Ike Rosenbud, with a small medallion of the managerial victim in the lower corner.

Rehearsals had now commenced and the various "artists" had bled the embryo manager for sums varying from ten to a hundred dollars each. Before the opening date had arrived the manager had spent his last dollar, and mortgaged his little homestead in New Jersey. Burke kept himself half-full day and night, but continued to tell funny stories to the "gang," and the paragraphs continued to circulate. Owing to circumstances beyond their control, the company did not open in a New York theatre, but gave their first performance in Elizabeth or Trenton. The Associated Press dispatches recorded the affair in all of the New York papers. "The play and star made a tremendous success. The house was not large but was very enthusiastic. The piece was rather draggy at times, but this was owing to incompetent people, who would be replaced at once, when with a little judicious pruning it would prove a laughing 'cyclone,'" etc., etc. Yet, somehow, Friday of the first week found Burke and his companions back in New York. Then followed the war of cards in the theatrical papers: "Incompetent manager;" "drunken agent;" "printing not up in time;" "press not properly worked;" "Burke's

portraits nowhere to be seen, but the agent's in every window;" "wretched support;" "will re-organize under able management;" "play to be extensively re-written by Col. Mulligan Bilkes," etc., etc. Meantime the poor managerial victim having had his experience, and being of the right sort, took off his coat, buckled down to work and got even. Otherwise he would have become a sot, a criminal, or a suicide.

Two or three responsible managers offered Burke a good salary and a better position than he had ever held or ever could have held on his merits, but no—he had been a "star" and could not afford to sacrifice his position. Another "angel" was found who took out the reorganized company with a result similar to his predecessor's. Then Burke, after working the lunch routes for a few weeks and borrowing odd half dollars from the plain, every-day actors, accepted an engagement in a responsible company with the understanding that he was to have his lithograph in the windows and his name starred in the cast.

The manager advanced money to get him a decent suit of clothes and settled his board

bill. He had never seen him act, but he had heard him tell some funny stories and read so much about him that he knew he must be great. But somehow Burke didn't catch on. The business manager wired the manager asking where he dug it up. On the third night Burke was too "indisposed" to appear, necessitating a substitute at short notice. The few in the audience who discovered the change thought it a decided improvement to the cast, but still Burke's "eccentricity" added to his reputation as a genius. Then the manager went on to Rochester to see the show. His experienced eye took the measure of the man in his first scene.

"How shall we get rid of him?" asked the manager.

"Leave that to me," said the business manager. "I'll bill him very heavy, with big puffs in the country papers, and by the time he gets two weeks' salary his head will begin to swell. Then I'll stop using his lithographs and put his name in small type like the rest, and he won't be seen. Then he will kick and wire you, back-capping me for not billing him. Then you wire him that I am the manager, and he

must fix it with me. Then he will resign—see?”

The experiment worked exactly as the shrewd business manager had prophesied. Then came a few more cards in the theatrical papers.

Burke was back in his old haunts telling his chestnuts, and the paragraphs were again working his next starring tour. Burke now began to affect the cynic and sneer at the “variety hains,” “one-part actors,” etc. He would also ask, “where did *he* come from?” “I never heard of him!” “I’d like to see him in a stock company doing the line of work I did.” “Actor? Actor nothing! he is simply a specialty performer—they don’t want actors *now*.” Burke had now entered upon his career as a Wrecked Genius. He went out with several “snaps,” sometimes holding out for two weeks, but oftener for two nights. With each return to the metropolis his cynicism became emphasized, his coat shinier and his nose became redder. He also became noticeable by that trademark of all Wrecked Geniuses, soiled linen.

RUNNING CONVERSATIONS.

“**T**HERE is something radically wrong with our humane societies,” said the fat comedian, “when a chicken that has reached this age is not safe from the rude clutch of the lunch counter dyspepsia propagator. Two weeks ago we made this run, and I spent the entire ten minutes over that drumstick. The girl took my half dollar like a little man, however, and just as we pulled out I saw her dump the unscarred drumstick on a clean plate and shove it over to a drummer, who ran in from the East-bound train. The latter evidently had no better success with it than myself, as I see it is still on deck.”

“Sixty-five cents, please,” said the young woman with watery eyes and red hair.

“What for?”

“Chicken, coffee and bisquit.”

“But I didn’t eat any chicken.”

“Well, it was there in front of you, wasn’t it?”

"Yes, and so was the water-cooler and show case, but I didn't eat 'em, did I? Besides I paid you for that piece of chicken when I was here two weeks ago, and I dare say you've been getting fifty cents for it an average of three times a day ever since. Some people are never satisfied."

"How do you know it's the same one?"

"Because I drove a tooth-pick into it with my umbrella handle, and there it is—see it?"

"ALL out for Schenectady!" yelled the brakeman.

"Has the Skeneateles accomodation gone yet?" asked the fat comedian.

"Yes, ten minutes ago."

"I thought this train connected?"

"So it does, some days."

"Well, why didn't the trains connect to-day?"

"What's that about Schenectady?"

"Who said anything about Schenectady?"

"You did."

"No, I didn't."

"Well, what did you say?"

"I simply asked an explanation of the failure of the trains to connect to-day."

"There ain't no failure of the train to Schenectady. This is the train and we're forty minutes late—all out for Schenectady."

"Did you say this was Schenectady?"

"Yes—didn't you hear me?"

"I thought I heard something like it. Hold on! don't pull the bell."

"What! Do you get off here?"

"No; I just want to change my watch to Central time."

"WOOSTER! All out for Wooster!" cried the brakeman.

"What town did you say this was?" asked the fat comedian.

"Wooster."

"I don't see any such name on this timetable."

"Then you had better learn to read. What do you call that right there?"

"I call that W-O-R-C-E-S-T-E-R, and I'd like to know how you make Wooster out of it."

"Maybe you'd better get off here and teach 'em how to pronounce their own name."

"I'll write to 'em about it. What time are we due in Rooster?"

"Due where?"

"In Rooster."

"There ain't no such town on the road."

"Then what do you call this—R-O-C-H-E-S-T-E-R?"

"I call that Rochester."

"Why don't you call it Rooster?"

"Do we make a close connection at Salamanca?" asked the fat comedian.

"Yes, I guess so," said the brakeman.

"Why don't you know?" asked the fat man.

"I do know, only I forget. Time changes at Salamanca and I always get mixed on the Central and Eastern time."

"What time do we run on?"

"Central."

"And what time does the R. & E. run on?"

"Eastern, I think—no; Central, I guess, or else—damifino."

"Well, I see we arrive in Salamanca at 8:37 and leave at 8:15 for Corry, so we must lay there all night."

"Lay where all night—in Corry?"

"No; in Salamanca."

"What do you want to lie in Salamanca all night for?"

"I don't want to; that's what I'm saying. I'm due in Erie at 10:45."

"Then you change at Salamanca and Corry."

"I know that as well as you do."

"Then what did you ask me for?"

"I didn't ask you about changes. I asked about connections."

"Well, I told you, didn't I? *Salamanca!* Ten minutes for refreshments!"

FAT comedian (at lunch counter, to hard-looking citizen with dirty hands, in attendance):

"What kind of pie you got?"

"Apple and mince."

"Make the mince-meat yourself?"

"No, I didn't."

"Then gimme some."

Brakeman to fat comedian: "I was right about that; time changes here and you lay over fifty minutes."

"Then what in blazes made you say ten minutes for refreshments."

"You don't want fifty minutes to eat a piece of pie, do you?"

"That depends on the pie. I can eat Salamanca pie in ten minutes, but I need the other forty for thought; and then again it gives me time to wire ahead to Erie whether they are to engage a doctor or notify the coroner."

"All aboard for Bradford."

"EXCUSE me for a minute," said the brakeman, with a suddenness that wakened the fat comedian from a comfortable nap; "but we're just making the Wild Gulch trestle, and I want to stand on the platform until we are safely across." The fat comedian jumped nimbly into the isle and held onto a seat until the train reached *terra firma*. "Do you know," continued the brakeman, returning and seating himself nervously, "whenever the train touches that trestle, my blood seems to stop circulating, my skin gets clammy and my back seems to kinder open and shut like."

"Is it considered unsafe?" asked the comedian anxiously.

"No, not that exactly, but I had a terrible adventure on that trestle about a year ago."

"What kind of an adventure?"

"Didn't you read about it in the papers?"

"I expect I did, I read everything, but I don't just recall this one. What was the nature of it?"

"It was headed 'Remarkable Presence of Mind of a Brakeman.' It was in all the papers and the *Police Gazette* had a full-page picture of it."

"Guess I must have missed it," said the comedian, "got a copy of one of the papers?"

"No, I only bought one copy. I sent that to the step-mother of a girl I was spooney on, to make an impression, and before I could get another copy, they were all bought up."

"Too bad," said the comedian. "But can't you tell me about it?"

"Yes, I can, but my nervous system gets all upset whenever I get to thinking about it."

"Take a mouthful of tonic before you commence," said the fat comedian, reaching for his overcoat. The brakeman disappeared between the seats for a moment, and then rose to the surface with the tears streaming from his eyes.

"Great Jonah," he gasped, "where did you get that?"

"Brought it from New York with me. How is it?"

"Immense," said the brakeman, gasping wildly.

"Don't get that sort of stuff very often, do you?" asked the comedian.

"Not very," said the brakeman, reaching for the water cooler, as the comedian replaced his bottle of liver regulator in his overcoat pocket.

"But about your terrible adventure?"

"O yes. Well you see, it was this way. It was a blizzard night in February. I never experienced anything like it. Several trains in Kansas were blown completely off the track. I was braking on a freight then, and we reached that trestle about three o'clock in the morning. I had crawled into the caboose to thaw the icicles off my hair and nose, when the engineer sounded down brakes. I jumped on top of the rear car and we got her stopped just before the engine touched the trestle. I ran along the tops of the cars up to the locomotive. There had been a heavy storm and the gulch was terribly swollen, with a raging torrent of water and ice, and the engineer stopped before going onto the trestle, as a sort of precaution. Just as

I reached the front car he sounded off brakes, and threw her wide open and started over the trestle wild. The train was a corker—thirty-eight box and nine platform cars. I started to run back as the train moved forward. It was a sharp down-grade onto the trestle, and in about a minute she was flying. The tops of the cars were covered with ice, and the wind and sleet was blowing about sixty miles an hour. I slipped and fell two or three times, but caught myself each time; once I fell between the cars head first, but caught the ladder with my toes and crawled back again. That was where my old circus experience came in handy. I had just reached about the middle of the train when a blast of wind and sleet struck me as though it had been shot out of a cannon. It blew me clean off the train. You see it is a flat trestle, with no frame-work above the track to catch me, and I started for the torrent below. Now here is where the presence of mind comes in: I had got about half way to the water, going down head first; I could see the broken ice and drift-wood tearing and roaring under the bridge. A sense of the awful death before me suddenly dawned on me, and so gathering all my

strength I turned and jumped back just in time to catch the rear platform of the caboose."

"Chestnuts! roasted chestnuts!" called the candy butcher, while a well developed snore from the big overcoat indicated that the fat comedian was sleeping sweetly.

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"Too bad, too bad, too bad!" said the fat comedian, a half hour later, as he dropped the newspaper on his knee, and put his hand over his eye as though to shut out a painful vision.

"What's too bad?" asked the brakeman, slipping into the vacant seat.

"Those terrible storms in Dakota. A man actually perished between his own barn and hen coop, and another lost between the house and well, and his frozen body found within twenty yards of his own door. But that school teacher was a brick who tied the little children together with their apron strings and got them all safely sheltered, though badly frozen herself. I suppose," said the comedian, thoughtfully, "no person can possibly realize the terrors of a northern snow storm from a mere cold word painting."

"Ever seen one yourself?" asked the brakeman.

"What! me? Well I should think so."

"In Dakota?"

"No, in Montana, way back in the sixties. Before the days of railroads, when we traveled in mud wagons and Concord coaches instead of palace cars. I was a member of Jack Langrishe's Dramatic Company then. One crisp morning in January, 1867, we started in an old mountain coach, drawn by six bronchos. We left Helena just at sunrise for Central City. There were five ladies and four gentlemen of the company inside the coach, and four more of us—the youngest and toughest—on top. It was a beautiful morning, and we started out as jolly as a party of picknickers. About noon the sun became obscured and scattering snowflakes began to fall. An hour later we were in the midst of a fully developed snow storm. We were now nearing the divide, and the cold became intense. The snow began to drift heavily, and as we approached the old Googer grade the air was so thick that we couldn't see the leaders. Old Bill Yokum, a famous driver in those days, had us in

charge, and "Sandy" McGuire, who had probably killed more ruffians, greasers and Indians than he could count, was seated beside him with his sawed-off shot gun, as guard. As we rounded a sharp angle in the grade we struck a drift that took the leaders in to their shoulder blades and brought the old coach up short, with snow up to the windows. "Sandy" McGuire ordered all hands on top of the coach to climb down, and then ordered the men folks inside to crawl out, and informed us that we must all foot it to the top of the grade. With the coach thus lightened, the bronchos again got under way, and the children of Thespis trudged along behind, blinded by the wind and drifting snow. There were nine of us all told, headed by "Sandy," and we mechanically fell into Indian file, I, scarcely knowing it, bringing up the rear. It was impossible to see five feet ahead, so we kept calling out to each other and answering back, down the line. I have always been fat and my legs are very short, and gradually I began to drop behind; I couldn't see any one, but I knew I was losing ground by the sound of the voices in front growing fainter with each call. Presently they ceased entirely

and then a terrible fear seized me. I tried to call with greater strength, and realized that I could not make a sound. Terror had robbed me of the power of speech. I was unable to move. Presently I began to feel numb and sleepy, and all pain and fatigue left me, but I had just sense enough left to remember hearing old prospectors tell that these were the final symptoms when people are freezing to death. Then I remembered my pocket flask, and forcing my hand through the snow into my pocket I brought it forth and drained it — a full pint of tanglefoot. The whisky seemed for a moment to give me superhuman strength, and I darted forward like a wild man; but I had completely lost my bearings, and in the blinding snow, with darkness just setting in, I plunged directly over the edge of the cliff along which the road ran.”

“Great Heaven!” cried the brakeman, wiping the perspiration from his forehead with his leather glove, “that was awful! How far did you fall?”

“Wait and see. I thought I would never stop. You see this was the north side of the mountain; the peaks above had protected

it entirely from the snow then drifting, but the old bed of snow that had been there for years was frozen as solid as a mountain of ice. After falling through the loose drift on the edge of the cliff, I struck this solid sheet of ice and commenced rolling down the mountain side. You see we were above timber line and there was'nt as much as a brush to grab at."

"Heavens!" gasped the brakeman, "where was the rest of 'em?"

"Wait! wait! Down! down! down I went, gathering velocity as I sped. I could see the jagged rocks and tops of the scrub pines protruding through the mountain of ice below me at the timber line. Suddenly I lost consciousness, then I struck something and stopped. I sat bolt upright; my hair, which had turned snow white, was standing like a barbed wire fence on my head, I could hear a wild confused sound of bells and bugles. In one second I lived over my twenty-two years, and all of my transgressions stood out like sign boards by the way. Aha! I thought, 'tis judgment day, and Gabriel's trumpet is not a myth. Then the whole world seemed to be tumbling about my ears, I jumped to my feet and tried to yell, then the bell came

again and then the trumpet, and then the familiar voice of the red-headed chambermaid, who made life a burden and sleep a delusion by singing "Just before the battle, mother," just before daylight every morning, assaulted my door with her number six foot, and my ear with her number twelve voice, thus-wise: "Hello! there! you fatty! Git out o' that, or ye'll git no brickfast. The coach starts for Cintral City in foive minutes."

"The funniest thing about that story," said the brakeman, as he moved toward the coal box, "is the way you got that pint of tangle-foot mixed up with the *dream* part of it."



FLOTSAM AND JETSAM.

THE DESCENT OF THE MANTLE.

YOU are right, my son ; it was a great mistake for Forrest and McCullough to leave their mantles floating around loose-like. It's odd, too, that their executors should have been so remiss as to make no suitable provision for the proper descent of the same. The woods are full of mantle-grabbers, and between the desperate clutches of this army of grabbers it is to be feared that the poor mantle will become unrecognizable. You are right—it is odd that it has not occurred to some fellow to get a mantle of his own and just vary the pattern a little. It has always seemed to me that the stupid public cares very little about mantles, anyway. It paid little attention to McCullough's struggle with the mantle until Forrest had been dead so long that the great majority of theatre-goers had never seen him, or, having seen, had forgotten just how the old man's mantle did hang, anyhow. "Do many

people go to see Hamlet now?" No, my son; very few. But thousands flock to see Booth. That's the difference. That's the point that mantle-grabbers seem to lose sight of or ignore, until the empty chairs and emptier purses set them to thinking.

Yes, indeed, my son, it is one thing to be a popular leading actor, and quite another thing to be a profitable star. This is a point that it takes many of us years to masticate. Personal popularity is good material to start with; then offer the public the kind of goods they want, and, knowing you to be a trustworthy salesman, they will buy. But make up your mind, to begin with, that they are not hankering after any new brands of fair to middling Othellos or Richelieus—at least not just now.

FORRESTONIAN HUMOR.

Yes, indeed, my son, the great tragedian had a wonderful sense of grim humor. I was playing with the "old man" in Pittsburg in '71 in Jack Cade. The Lord Say of the cast was a man with a poetic name and a pronounced Irish mug, and a no less pronounced brogue. His dressing of the part was a nightmare of

gaudy tints; no color escaped him. The whole was surmounted by a ruff, with a small cap and a bunch of straggling cocks-feathers. Altogether he was about as unlike the sombre Lord Say as he could well be. In the closing scene of the play, instead of armor he still clung to his rainbow-hued raiment. As Lord Clifford I had been decently killed in the third act, and I was haunting the entrances listening to the "old man's" reading. (At that time it was painful to see him in Cade). Newt Gotthold was the Friar Lacy, and as he stood beside Forrest at the back of the stage, while the pink and red Say was wildly gesticulating in the right corner, I heard the great actor growl in gutturals to Gotthold:

"Iv'e been trying all night to think what that d—d creature looks like; I've just got it."

"What is it?" queried Gotthold.

"*Punch's* dog," growled Forrest.

And he did. Look at the title page of *Punch*, and you will appreciate the joke.

DEGENERACY (?) OF THE STAGE.

No, my son, I am not one of the croakers about the "degeneracy" of the stage. There is

a good deal of unadulterated rot in the "palmy day" chestnut. At the present day actors are better paid and plays are better acted and better produced than at any time during my two decades of professional life. More than that, the actor is constantly progressing in every direction. The man who could night after night disappoint and insult the public, and still retain favor, is known no more among us. The "wrecked genius"—that is, the man who never amounted to anything until he became notorious through drunkenness—was one of the conspicuous figures of the "palmy days," now happily almost extinct. Still, my son, I *do* consider that in certain characters, notably Lear, Richelieu and Virginius, Edwin Forrest, in his old age, was so much greater than any other actor I have ever seen, that there is absolutely no plane of comparison; while to the thoughtful actor and student of Shakespeare his reading of Hamlet was a revelation. But you needed to close your eyes. The grand old man became a student at fifty, and died with the pages of the Master open before him.

BLACKSTONE AND THESPIS.

Yes, my son, that modest little man, with an expansive forehead, who hailed us from his family carriage on the New Orleans shell-road the other day, was Charles F. Buck, an eminent and successful lawyer of that city, and that handsome lady at his side was Mrs. Buck, and that group of merry little ones were all little Bucks. And that carries me back to September, 1867, and Leavenworth, Kas., when and where Charley Buck and myself began to learn the trade of acting. It was not a bad company. Charley and I were the utility. Susan Denin, rest her soul! was the manageress. And here, my son, let me pause to pay the poor tribute of a tear to the cherished memory of one of the noblest souls, one of the greatest actresses and one of the most beautiful and unfortunate women of our generation. If, on the other side, there are crowns for those whose lives on this were periods of martyrdom and self-sacrifice, then poor Susan Denin's halo rivals the spheres in splendor.

Those were the "palmy days," my boy. My salary was (to be) fifteen dollars a week; Buck's the same. We got it one week. The next

week we got a reduction; the next we got a promise, and the next we got turned out of the boarding-house. Then poor Mme. Scheller came on for a star engagement. By some mysterious process we contrived to get down to Kansas City, then a little clump of houses clustered around the old Market Square. We played in Frank's Hall, an old up-stairs rookery, seating about three hundred people. From here we managed to make St. Joe, and here it was, in the old Odd Fellows' Hall, with an iron post running up through the centre of the stage, (how the low comedians used to love that post!) that the great "Nobles-Buck Tragic Alliance" was formed. We had been watching Chaplin and Tannehill wrestling with Pizarro, Macbeth, Melnotte, etc., and we knew that all we wanted was a chance to show the public how much greater we were than either of them. The opportunity came sooner than we anticipated. I think we wrestled with Fate for about three weeks in St. Joe. The time is impressed upon my mind by a little incident. Buck and myself, preparing for our tour, used to wander along the old steamboat wharf, spouting scenes from Othello and The Wife. It was while

engaged in this occupation that we one night discovered the principals of our company quietly stealing aboard a steamer. In plain English, the manager, star and principals skipped between two days, leaving numerous creditors to mourn their untimely departure. Buck and myself being only the "utility," were not taken into consideration; our places could be easily filled by pick-ups in Omaha, to which point the midnight decampers were bound. The next morning found the embryo tragedians wrecked. Then the landlady told us that we owed eighteen dollars each for board, at six dollars a week, and that's how I know just how long we were in St. Joe.

Genius is not easily crushed at twenty, and so we organized a benent. We were perfectly confident that the humble positions we had occupied in the company had not obscured from a discerning public the fact that we were really the magnates of the organization. Besides, I had recently had several low comedy parts in the farces, and had extracted several full-grown laughs from the entire audience (usually about twenty-five people, trying to keep the big stove warm in the lower end of the hall). A little

eloquence, a silver watch and a plain gold ring convinced the newspaper man that our personal popularity was sufficient to "pack the house." So he gave us a send-off and five hundred quarter-sheet programmes. The hall man agreed to take his chances in the box-office, and we began to "work her up."

The people of St. Joe who stayed away from that benefit (and I may say in parenthesis that they constituted the entire population) will never know what they missed. But we were there, and the programme was there, with our names in big letters. It was a bitter night, way down below zero, and a blinding snow-storm, but the little group around the stove in the L. U. E. of the hall cheered us to the echo. Buck was crummy on his Iago; he had played it with the amateurs in New Orleans. I had never done Othello, but I had seen three or four leading heavy men struggle with him, and I was confident that I couldn't do anything worse. And so we howled through the great jealousy scene.

Buck punched the animal and I did the howling. Of course, we howled ourselves hoarse in two minutes, and reduced the rest of the

scene to facial contortions. Then Buck rung in Collins' "Ode to the Passions." Then I gave 'em "Shamus O'Brien." (My first trial of it). Buck sang a ballad without music; I sang a topical song, slathering our late absconding stars and managers, of course. Then we gave them Box and Cox, minus Mrs. Bouncer. I don't know how we did it, but we did. Eleven o'clock came and then the hall man came and said he had taken only \$16.75, and the rent was \$20.00. He asked what we were going to do about it, and we asked what he was going to do about it. We offered to divide the gross and call it square, but that didn't seem to strike him right, so he kept it all.

Yes, my son, it is a fact that just thirteen years after that I hunted up that good-hearted boarding-house keeper and paid him that bill, with interest. If you don't believe it, ask him. His name is Bacon, and I think he has a hotel bearing his name in St. Joe now.

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And so, my son, you see the player's life is not all tinsel and sunshine. The ideal Prince of Denmark has fought poverty and worked the lunch route in his day. The Prince of

Como has burned midnight oil mastering the description of his palace by the Lake of Como, and darning his princely silk stockings. The haughty slayer of the tyrant Richard, doffing his spangled armor, has hurried from Bosworth Field, and the ringing plaudits of a crowded theatre, to a half furnished garret, where, book in hand and a moistened towel on his head, he has labored with Macduff till gray dawn came peeping through his narrow window; then with scant rest and scantier breakfast, he is off to rehearsal; back again at three, a cold remnant for dinner, three hours spent in "fixing up togs" and cramming the lines, and off to the shop again. So has he seen the days go into weeks, the weeks into months, the months into years.

This is no ideal picture, my son. That haughty queen, surrounded by courtiers, serfs and flatterers, has gone from that scene of tinsel and royalty to a wretched boarding-house, and spent the night fixing up the "old man's" toga, and changing the tinsel and puffing on her own royal gown, which she must wear the next night for a maid-of-honor. The nimble Touchstone and the jolly, drunken Toodles,

with the laughter still ringing in his ears, has hurried home to relieve a patient wife in the care of a dying child. We are human, my son—human, men and women, like the rest of the world. True, there are those among us who have found a royal road to fame and fortune, but their number is limited. They are the exceptions, not the rule.

But, stock or star, rich or poor, every old actor is proud to have it known that his early professional life was one of struggles, hard work and constant self-denial, and no period of his career is so dear in treasured memories as the days of his vagabond novitiate.





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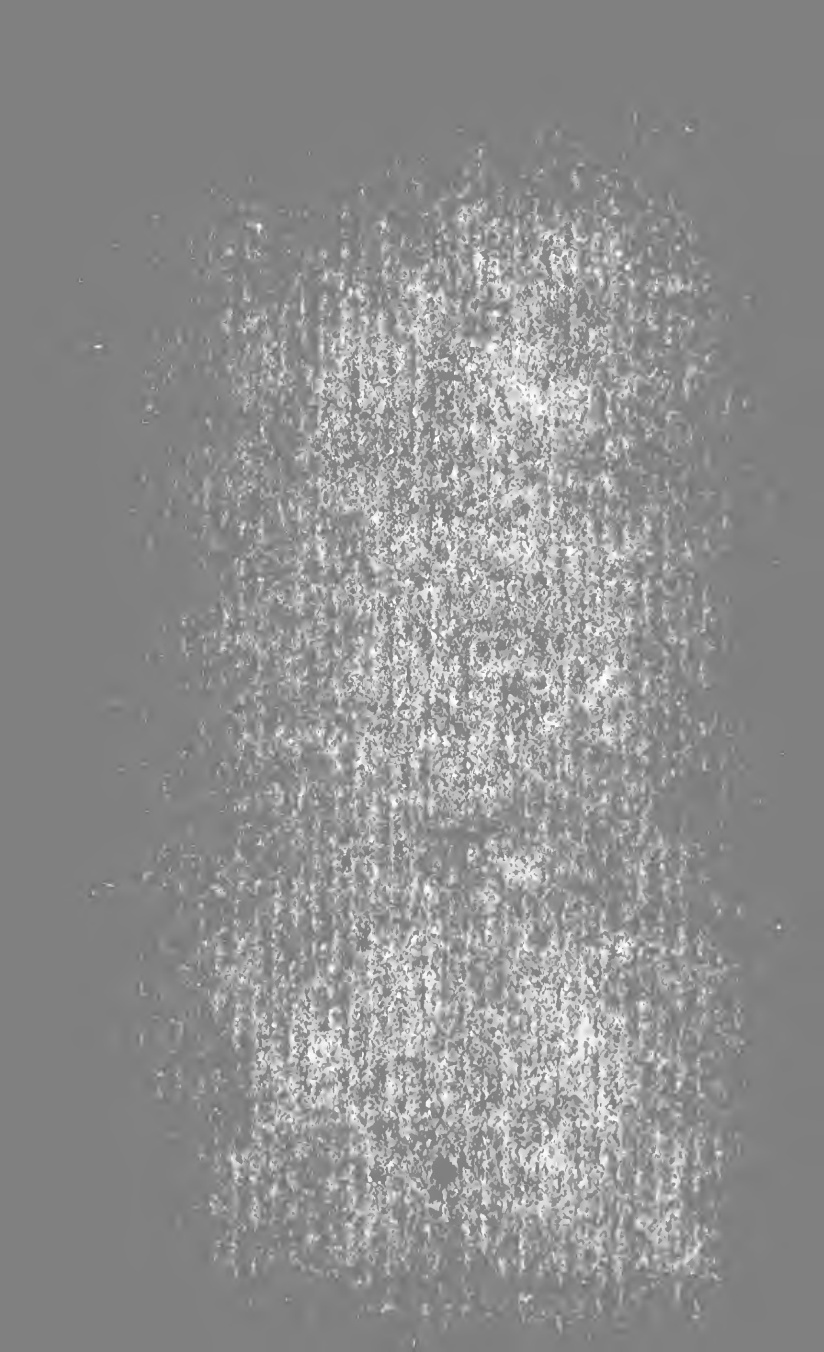
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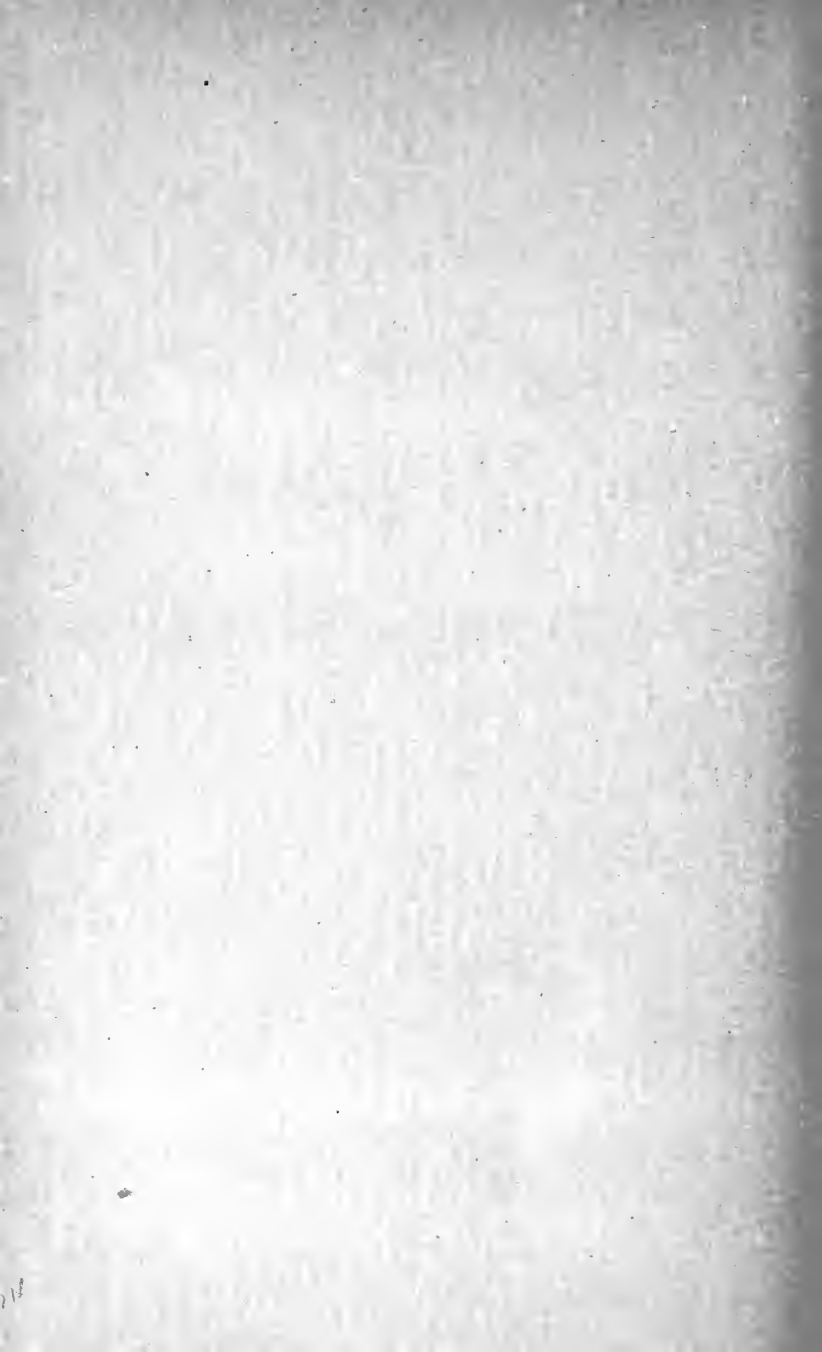
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